HOLIDAYING
AND
TREKKING
IN
KASHMIR

by

N. L. BAKAYA

KANI KADAL

SRINAGAR - KASHMIR

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Although the idea of writing this small book has been in my mind ever since my retirement as a teacher and Sports Organiser in Srinagar Kashmir, I got the real stimulus to embark upon this task through the overwhelming persuasion of my friends. I must, therefore, first of all acknowledge my indebtedness to them. No doubt that I have for the purpose of writing this book mainly drawn upon my own experiences and cherished memories of my treks through alluring hills and dales of the Happy Valley and of the numerous climbs and hikes to her prominent peaks and high altitude lakes, I have had to glean useful information about the Valley from other sources also especially what different writers from Bernier to Neve and recently Bamzai have contributed ty this literature.

I also take this opportunity to thank my brother Dr. K.N. Bakaya of the University of Rajasthan, my nephew Shri P.N. Bakaya, Director of Information Jammu and Kashmir, Shri J.L. Kaul, retired Principal, S.P. College Srinagar, Shri P.N. Pushp, Director, Libraries and Archives, Jammu and Kashmir and Mr. E.D. Tyndale Biscoe, Ex-Principal, C.M.S. Schools, Srinagar, for their very valuable suggestions. My grateful acknowledgement is also due to Pandit Ramju Dhar, Librarian, Research Library, Srinagar for his kind assistance.

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N.L. Bakaya

FOREWORD

Shri N.L. Bakaya has prepared an attractive guide to Kashmir for the tourist, and has also included some useful information regarding Jammu and Ladakh. I am sure his small book will be of value to the large number of visitors who come every year to the happy valley in order to enjoy its unrivalled beauty.

(Dr.) KARAN SINGH

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

I have tried to make this little guide book still more useful by up-dating the information, by adding two maps —one of Srinagar city and one of Kashmir valley—and an index of names of places and prominent people mentioned in the book. Besides, I have added a few pages which throw some light on the ethnic origin of the ancient people of Kashmir, their customs and their religion. With these further additions, I am looking forward to a still better response.

The reader will also find on the backside cover the opinions of some knowledgeable persons and the press which makes me confident that the book merits a second edition.

N.L. Bakaya

INTRODUCTION

General Description: Kashmir is known all over the world as "the Paradise on earth", on account of its scenic beauty of grand and magnificient mountains, clad in shimmering, silvery, snowy mantles, which scintilate under the bright rays of the sun. This vast verdent valley is studded with many sparkling fresh water lakes, resembling jewels on an emerald background. They mirror the blaze of colour of the sunset, the soft pink hues of the morning glory and the delicate shades of the passing clouds on their dancing blue waters—an artist's paradise. It has numerous streams, meandering down through its green and colourful valleys. It has dense forests of blue pines, tall firs and graceful deodars. It has charming side-valleys of varied scenery, leading up to its bewitching meadows, literally covered with a luxurious growth of lovely wild flowers of all colours and hues. It has numerous singing brooks and dashing cascades, and smiling springs which gush out of the mountain sides and supply their life-giving waters to its beautifully laid out gardens and orchards, which the ingenuity of the human hand has planted all over this Happy Vale. About this Kashmir, Sir Francis Younghusband has to say this, "The beautiful Greece, with its purple hills of varied contours, its dancing seas and clear blue sky produced the graceful Greece. But Kashmir is more beautiful than Greece. It has the same blue sky and brilliant sunshine, but its purple hills are on a grander scale, and it has no sea, but it has lake and river, and still more impressive snowy mountains. It has, too, greater variety of natural scenery, of field and forest, of rugged mountain and open valley. And to me who has seen both

countries, Kashmir seems much more likely to impress a race by its natural beauty. Has it made any such impression? Are there no remains of buildings, roads, aqueducts, canals, statues or any such mark by which a people leaves its impress on a country? And is there any literature or history? Certainly, there are the ruins of temples and buildings all over the valley, remarkable for their Egyptian solidity and durability, as well as, what Cunningham describes as 'their graceful elegance, the massive boldness of their parts, and the happy propriety of their outlines'. And Kashmir has the unique distinction of possessing an unbroken historical record from ancient times to the present day. In the field of literature and philosophy it stands second to none in the rest of India, for in the words of the Chronicler, "learning, lofty houses, saffron, grapes, and icy-waters, things which are difficult to get in heavens, are common here".

Grierson says, "For upwards of two thousand years, Kashmir has been the home of Sanskrit learning and from this small valley have issued masterpieces of history, poetry, romance, fable and philosophy. Kashmiris are proud and justly proud of the literary glories of their land. For centuries it was the home of the greatest Sanskrit scholars and at least one great Indian religion, Shaivism, has found some of its most eloquent teachers on the banks of the Vitasta. Some of the greatest poets were born here, and wrote in the valley and from it has issued, in Sanskrit language a well-famous collection of Sanskrit folk lore".

Kashmir seems to have acquired renown since very early times. To Greeks Kashmir was known as Kaspeira, a land situated below the source of Bedaspes (Vitasta) and of Sandabal (Chandrabaga). Ptolemy mentions this territory correctly enough between that of the Dards on the Indus and the land of Kulindas on the Hyphasis. There

is a curious notice preserved from Bassarika, a lost poem of Dionysios of Samos which mentions Kaspeiroi as a tribe famous among all Indians for their fast feet. Kaspeiroi is also mentioned in the Dionysioka of Nannos where they are said to have risen in arms against Bacches.

Earlier Chinese reference to Ki-pin appears to be vague, but the first clear reference is contained in a record dating from 541 A.D. during the early part of Tsang dynasty when an Indian envoy reached China. It describes Kashmir "as a country enveloped on all sides, like a precious jewel by the snowy mountains, with a valley in the south, which leads upto it". Ninety years after this, Hiuen Tsang who reached the valley from Ursa (Hazara) and resided for full two years in Kashmir, describes 'Kia-Shi-mi-Lo' as being enclosed on all sides by mountains with narrow and contracted passes. He mentions that its soil is fertile and abounding in fruits and flowers.

The Chinese notices also mention the arrival of the first embassy from Kashmir in 713 A.D. sent by Tohen-to-lo-pi-li (Chandrapida) and ten years later by Mu-to-pi (Muktapida Lalitaditya). In 759 A.D., the pilgrim Ou-K'oung visited Kashmir, not many years after this embassy of Muktapida. He makes mention of many Buddhist Viharas.

The Moghul emperor *Jehangir* who, together with his 'art-minded queen' Noor Jehan beautified Kashmir by laying out gardens, had this to say about its natural beauty, "Kashmir is a garden of eternal spring......a delightful flower-bed and heart expanding hermitage for 'dervishes'. Its pleasant meadows and enchanting cascades are all beyond description. There are running streams and fountains beyond count. Wherever the eye reaches there are verdure and running water. The red rose, the violet and the narcissus grow by themselves....In the soul-enchanting spring the hills and plains are filled with blossoms".

And while on his death bed, he was asked what his last wish was. He is quoted to have said,

"Khurd gundum adam az Jenat Kashedandash birun, Manki Khurdam ashijao Yarab ba Kashmiram rasan". (Adam was turned out of the paradise for eating a grain of wheat. Since I have been living on barleywater, O God! permit me to reach Kashmir.)

Bernier the first European who entered Kashmir in the company of Aurangzeb in 1665 A.D. called "Cachemire the paradise of Indies" and said, "In fact the Kingdom surpasses in beauty all that my imagination had anticipated". Others like *Vigne, Drew, Buhler, Cunningham, Lawrence* and a host of others wrote in the same vein. In the "Valley of Kashmir", Lawrence writes, "Here every hundred feet of elevation brings some new phase of climate and vegetation. In a short ride of thirty miles one can pass from overpowering heat to a climate delightfully cool or can escape from wearisome wet weather to a dry or sunny atmosphere. From an English point of view the valley contains everything which should make life enjoyable. There is sport varied and excellent, there is scenery for the artist and layman, mountains for the mountaineer, flowers for the botanist, vast field for the geologist and magnificient ruins for the archaeologist. The epicure will find dainty fruits and vegetables, while the lounger can pass delightful days in the houseboat moored under the shady chenar tree", (the foliage of which turns purple, claret, red and yellow in autumn. This autumn tinting backed against a clear blue sky and reflecting in the glittering placid waters of the Dal Lake or the Jehlum river, forms a picture which can be seen in no other country than in Kashmir.) "Last but not the least, the invalid must find somewhere in the varied climate of Kashmir the change of 'air and water' which will restore him to the health of which he has been

robbed. The mountains which surround Kashmir are never monotonous. Infinitely varied in form and colour, they are such as an artist might see in a dream".

Notices about Kashmir in ancient Indian literature are comparatively very scanty. Mention has been made about it in the "ganas of Panini"—the great grammatical work, and Patanjali's comments. The Mahabharata also refers in several passages to the 'Kasmiras' and their rulers, but in vague and general terms about the country being situated in the hill regions in the north. Puranas also make mention of Kashmir. Perhaps, the specific piece of information regarding Kashmir that Sanskrit literature outside Kashmir can furnish is conveyed in the term 'Kashmira' or 'Kashmiraja', which designates the safforn and according to lexicographers also the root of Kustha (Kuth) or costus specious, (the aromatic root of saussarialappa), which grows in abundance on the mountains of Kashmir.

Geography: Nature itself, when creating the great valley of Kashmir which lies between 33° to 34°, 34′ north and 74°8′ to 75°25′ east, and its enclosing wall of mountains, seems to have assured this territory not only a distinct geographical character, but also a historical existence of marked individuality.

The name Kashmir, in its original Sanskrit form has been used as a sole designation of the country throughout its whole history. This can be traced through an unbroken chain of documents for more than twenty centuries. The name itself is far more ancient.

Its geographical position has a distinct and in some respects a unique character. Here is a fertile plain, embedded among high mountain ranges, a valley large enough to form a kingdom for itself, and capable of supporting a highly developed civilization. Its height above the sea level is nowhere less than 5000 ft. and its peculiar position

assured to it a climate equally free from the heat of India and the rigours of the cold peculiar to higher mountain ranges in the north and east.

The form of the country is a great irregular oval, bounded by Pir Pantsal range on the south and south west, Kajnag and Haramukh on the north, and the Sonamarg and Kolahoi massifs, Duran Nar, Kohenhar and Amar Nath Ranges forming the outer ring on the east, while mount Mahadeo and Sridvara (Zebarwan) form part of its inner eastern circle. The low and more or less flat parts measure eightyfour miles in length from south-east to north-west, while its width varies from twenty to twentyfive miles. Around the great plain rise mountain ranges, which enclose it in an almost unbroken ring. The irregular oval ring enclosed by them is about 116 miles. The slopes of the mountains descending towards the central plain are drained by numerous streams, all of which join the Vitasta.

In this great chain of mountains, there is but one narrow gap near Baramulla in the north-west end of the valley.

According to ancient legend, Kashmir is said to have been a lake. This is mentioned by Kalhana in the Rajatarangini and also in the Nilamata Purana. It was called Satisaras, the lake of Sati (Durga). It is said that a great water demon Jalodbhava, who lived in the lake, caused distress to all the neighbouring countries by his devastations. Nila the King of Nagas, complained about him to his father, Sage Kashyapa. The sage then promised to punish the evil-doer and proceeded to the seat of gods and implored them for help. The whole host of gods then started for the Satisaras and took their seats on the lofty peaks of the Naubandhana Tirtha (Konsarnag). The demon refused to come out of the lake. Visnu thereupon called his brother Balabhadra to drain the lake by piercing the mountain near Baramulla. This done, the demon was

attacked by Visnu and after a fierce combat, slain.

Kashyapa then settled in the land of Kashmir which had thus been produced.

Drew thinks that there was a relation between the legend and the facts, which seem to support the belief that Kashmir was in comparatively late geological times wholly or in great part occupied by a vast lake.

Drew and Godwin Austin base their observations on lacustrine deposits, found in the Karewas (Plateaux) which according to Lydekkar could not have been formed without the aid of a dam lower down the valley by which its waters were pounded back. Drew estimates that at one period of its existence, the old lake must have reached a level of 2000 ft. above the present level of the valley. Lawrence thinks this estimate to be too high. In his opinion, it would include the sloping Karewas of the Pir Pantsal, which are probably not of lacustrine origin, but connected with a general rise of the country along the whole length of the Pir Pantsal range, causing the valley of Kashmir which was formerly an open river valley, to have become elevated and blocked at its lower end in the neighbourhood of Baramulla. In the basin thus formed the upper Karewas may have been deposited with their southern edges resting on the tilted beds of the lower 'Karewas'. This basin may have been subsequently drained by the river, cutting down the present rock-edge at or below Baramulla. The lower 'Karewas' bear a striking resemblance to the topmost Shivaliks of the outer hills, which are likewise tilted and have similar north-westerly strike. If it is so, their age must be lower pleistocene or the very highest pliocene.

It is probable that some of the bedded fine grained deposits were deposited in still water, but the frequent alteration of beds of shingle with sand and layers of lignite

from one to three inches in thickness point to the subaerial conditions of formation. Even the presence of true lacustrine deposits does not prove that the whole of Kashmir basin was ever occupied by a lake. This rock-basin was gradually formed by a deformation of the earth's crust and the hollow so produced was filled up as soon as formed.

The People and their ethnic origin: In ancient Kashmir the people ethnically did not form a single homogenious group. There has been an intermingling of different races and communities, as can be evidenced by the formation of their bodies, their language, their culture and traces of their ethnic features. Sakas or Scythians who arrived in India about the middle of the 2nd century B.C., seem to have more intimate relation with Kashmir. The Baltis are generally considered to be descendants of the Sakas. In the early centuries of the Christian era the Kusanas held sway over Kashmir. A group of sculptures from ancient Sadardhavana (Harvan) show unmistakably Central Asian tribes with characteristic racial features, who might have settled in the 4th century A.D. Besides, there has been slight influx from Tibet. The next infiltration was by the Hunas in the 5th Century A.D. Mihirkula's rule is testified by Hieun Tsang and Kalahana.

Kashmir according to Kalahana was once a part of the Mauryan Empire and Asoka is said to have founded the city of Srinagar as well as various religious establishments. It is therefore but natural that many people from the rest of India also settled in the valley. About their origin and racial characteristics no definite historical information is available, but an analysis of the Kashmirian language throws interesting light on their enthnic composition.

The Kashmirian language contains a large number of Sanskrit words, but the language itself is not of Sanskritic

origin. It belongs to the Dardic group which though not Sanskritic is Aryan. This Subbranch of the Dardic language is called Paisaci in ancient Sanskrit. Though Sanskrit grammarians class it as a Prakrit it was not really a Prakrit, but a very ancient language which was sister but not a daughter of that form of speech, which later on developed in India as literary Sanskrit.

Paisaci was generally confined to the region between the Hindukush and the Indian frontier. Grierson has pointed that Paisaci or Dardic language though undoubtedly belonging to Aryan stock is nevertheless, neither Iranian nor Indo-Aryan. The Kashmirian language possesses certain peculiarities of its own. Besides, it has a small and unimportant element of Burushaki, the language spoken by the inhabitants of Hunzanagar. It is very likely that the inhabitants of Hunzanagar occupied the valley of Kashmir before the advent of the Dard speaking people. It, therefore, looks probable that Burushaki speaking Nagas were the first inhabitants of the Kashmir valley. They were driven out by Dards, the speakers of Paisaci and they in turn were ousted by Sanskrit speaking Aryans.

From Archaeological and historical evidence, it is, however, clear that though Indo-Afghans were the predominating race in the recent population of Kashmir, there was a definite admixture of other races from time to time. Nothing can at present be said about the nature of the neolithic population whose skeletal remains from Burzahom have not yet been analysed. It is, however, to be noted that these people have been assigned to a period between 2300 and 1500 B.C. on the basis of carbon 14 dating. This date, in all probability, proceeds the period of entry of the ancestors of the Dardic speakers in the valley of Kashmir and, as such, it will have to be admitted

that the neolithic settlers of Burzehom (see. p——) are the earliest known human inhabitants of Kashmir.

Classes of People: From the socio-economic standpoint, people could be grouped into various classes according to the profession adopted by them. Caste system as practised in India seems not to have existed here. Brahmins most of them having migrated from the rest of India were considered most privileged and served as priests. Many of them served as ministers and councillors. Even the military carreer was open to them. They also served as teachers, astrologers, physicians and bureaucrats (Kayasthas) who carried on the general administration. Then, there were people who served in the king's army. The majority of the people were tillers of the soil. Connected with the land was a class called Damaras (feudal land owners). By the 10th century A.D. they became the most powerful element in the state and had their own private armies which enabled them to interfere even in the question of royal succession. Besides, there existed a rich merchant class who according to Kalahana owned palaces which excelled the royal palaces in comforts and decoration.

The other classes were menials, such as, the Nishadas, the Kirtas, the Doombas, and the Candalas. The Nishadas appear to be the aboriginal tribes who earned their living by hunting and fishing. The term included the boatmen also. The Kirtas were forest dwellers. They mostly lived by hunting. Racially Kirtas mentioned in Sanskrit literature belonged to Tibet-Burman group. Perhaps, they were neighbouring hill tribes of the Tibetan region. The Doombas have been frequently mentioned by Kalahana as a class of menials who were sometimes associated with Candalas and were singers and dancers. The Candalas seem to have been fierce and cruel fighters and some of them served as royal body-guards and watchmen. They

were universally hated.

Position of Women: According to Kalahana, the first part of the life of the upper class woman was spent in her father's house where a liberal education was imparted to her. This included sexual sciences of Vastsyana and others: the'natyasastra' of Bharati; 'Visahhilas'' treatise on art; Dantila's work on music; besides painting, needlework, wood work, clay modelling, cookery and practical training in instrumental music. Perhaps, the ladies of the royal family were given a bit of administrative training also, as can be seen from the examples of queens like Didda, Kalhanika and Sugandha who carried on the administration of the state most efficiently. It is also clear from the study of the Rajtarangini that pre-puberty marriages were not in vogue. The custom of Sati was very common among the upper classes. A widow was expected to live a pure life, devoid of luxury. The use of gorgeous dress and ornaments was forbidden to her. But a passage in the Rajataraangini tends to show that after the death of her husband, the widow became the heir to his immovable property and not his son.

Religion: The earliest inhabitants of Kashmir probably had some aboriginal beliefs. Snake worship seems to have been established in the valley since a remote date. The Nilamatapurana records that Kashmir after being created out of water was left to the care of Nagas. Nila, the son of Kasyapa was the chief. Abul Fazal also has recorded that there were 700 places in the valley where there were carved images of snakes which the inhabitants worshipped.

Buddhism seems to have obtained a footing in Kashmir as early as 4th or 3rd century B.C. Ashoka is said to have sent Majjahantika to Kashmir to preach Buddhism. He is said to have settled 500 Arhats here. Ashoka also

built many stutues some of which were existing as late as the time of Hieun Tsang. Buddhism entered its golden phase under the patronage of Kusana king Kaniska and his successors who came to occupy the valley about the end of 1st century A.D. Many Buddhist scholars resided here, prominent among them was Nagarjuna (see p——) Many local kings also patronised it by erecting stutues and viharas.

Saivism: The history of Saivism in Kashmir is shrouded in mystery. Archaeologists have discovered traces of Siva worship in the proto-historic Harappa culture. It is not known whether the Siva of Kashmir was an immigrant from the neighbouring Indus valley or was of local origin. The concept of Rudra Siva of the Vedic Aryans might have had some influence on the development and early growth of Saivism in the valley. However, there is no doubt that Siva was widely worshipped here from a remote period. The early Saivism seems to have preached dualistic doctrine. From the 8th century onwards, it was based on pure 'Advaita Tatva' and began to preach a sort of idealistic monism called 'Trika Sastra'. Its founder was Vasugupta. Siddha Somananda wrote a philosphic treatise, supporting the 'Trika' doctrine by critical arguments and reasoning. Other propounders were Utpala, Abhinavagupta, Ksemaraja, Yogaraja and Jayaratha. This idealistic monism of 'Trika' system remained confined to a particular class of teachers and philosphers only. The masses kept themselves attached to their old forms of Siva worship and the old Pasupati Saivism prevailed in the valley.

Vaisnuism: This cult also seems to have existed here from a very early period. The earliest reference to it being during the reign of Pravarasena II (about the end of 6th century A.D.). Various incarnations of Visnu,

such, as Varaha, Nrasimha, Rama and Krishna were popular. Besides many other gods and goddesses, such as, Surya, Karttikya, Ganesa, Durga, Lakhsmi, etc. also were worshipped.

History: Our information about the ancient history of Kashmir comes mostly from the Rajatarangini, written by Kalhana in the 12th Century A.D. the material whereof was collected by him from earlier compositions and from the dedicatory inscriptions of various temples and religious buildings, original grants on copper plates, old coinage of the country, popular traditions, besides his personal knowledge of his contemporary times and Nilamata Purana. Other writers, such as, Jonaraja, Srivara, Prajyabhatta, Haider Malik, Abdul Fazal, Hassan, Fauq, Bamzai and others brought it down to the present, times.

Kalhana has used Laukika era and placed its beginning on Caitra Sudi of Kali Samvat or the year 3076-75 B.C. He places the accession of Gonanda I, the first of the lost kings of Kashmir in the year 653 of the Laukika era, which corresponds with the coronation of Yudistra, the Pandava hero of the epics. Most of the kings mentioned by him upto the beginning of the Karkota dynasty (600-63 A.D.) with the exception of historical personages like Ashoka, Kaniska, Harsa, Mihirkula and his father Toromana may be considered legendary until such time as their authenticity may be verified from other sources too. The accuracy of Kalahana's chronology cannot be challenged for the last three centuries before the end of the Chronicle (1149-50 A.D.)

Legendary History: Gonanda, I, the powerful King of Kashmir goes to help his relative Jarasandha against Krishna, the hero of the Mahabharata and is killed. His son Damodhara I goes also to avenge his father's death and is killed by Krishna, who places his widow Yasovati on

the throne of Kashmir. Gonanda II, her son, succeeds her. 52 kings whose names are lost, follow him. Their reign lasts for 2268 years when Gonanda III ascends the throne. The chronicle is carried on for another 2230 years, which marks the period between Gonanda III and Kalhana's death in 1149-50 A.D.

Kalhana also refers to Ashoka and his inscriptions. He attributes the foundation of Srinagar (Purana-adhistan) to him. His son Jaluka succeeds him on the throne of Kashmir. He mentions Huska, Juska and Kaniska as having ruled Kashmir. The existence of Huskapura (Ushkar), Juskapura (Zakura) and Kaniskapura, the villages in Baramulla District named after them testify to this statement. Kaniska is said to have held his third great Council here. Mention is also made of Mihirkula and his father Toramana (515 A.D.). He is nicknamed 'Trikotihan' the killer of three crores. He also mentions a host of kings who have earned a place of honour in the history of Kashmir by erecting numerous religious monuments, some of which still exist. Gopaditya is mentioned as having built the temple of Jyesthesvara on Gopadari hill—(Shankaracharya hill). Matrigupta, the saintly king of Kashmir, is followed by his son Pravarasena II who founded the present city of Srinagar in the 6th Century A.D.

Authentic History: The chronicler is on firm ground when he comes to Durlabhavardhana (627-49 A.D.), the founder of the Karkota dynasty. The most important kings of this dynasty are Chandrapida, Lilitaditya Mukhtapida and Jayapida. Lalitaditya (649-736 A.D.) was a famous warrior, whose conquests extended outside Kashmir to the south-east, south-west and north. He built the famous temple of Martanda, the ruins of which are still grand and imposing. He also built the city of Phariha-

spura, extensive ruins of which lie scattered on the 'Karewa' and at its foot near Divar, 21 km in the north-west of Srinagar. Though a worshipper of Visnu, he built Buddha Viharas and Siva temples also. He conquered Dards and Bhauttas. Tang annals mention Mukhtapida (Mu-to-pi) as having sent an ambassador to China. He claims repeated victories over Tibetans by his master. Jayapida is also said to have led several expeditions to the south and penetrated as far as Bengal. He was followed by a number of weak kings.

Another great name in the history of Kashmir is that of Avantivarmana (855-83 A.D.). This was the period of peaceful consolidation. He built temples at Avantipura which, though not equal in size to the Martanda temple, rank among the most imposing monuments of ancient Kashmiri architecture. His chief engineer Suyya diverted the old course of the Vitasta below Shadipura into its present course, as a result of which a vast area of land was reclaimed and brought under cultivation. His son Sankaravaramana (833-902 A.D.) was another warrior-king who extended the borders of Kashmir by his conquests. He built temples at Sankarapura (Pattan) using the material from Parihaspura.

Didda (958-80 as Regent and 980-1003 A.D. as ruler) was the daughter of Simharaja of Lohara. She was married to Khsemagupta, after whose death she ruled Kashmir with a firm hand. Didamar, one of the mohallas on the right bank below the sixth bridge, is named after her. Her nephew Sangramaraja succeeded her. During his reign Mahmud Gaznai invaded Kashmir and laid seige to the fort of Lohkot in Lohara. An early snowfall and reinforcement from Kashmir compelled him to retreat. A number of weak kings followed, during whose reigns, 'Damaras' (powerful fuedal chiefs) had the upper hand.

There was much internecine warfare and struggle for power, assasinations and betrayals.

After 1149-50 A.D. Jonaraja's record shows that for nearly two centuries till 1339-A.D. Hindu rule maintained itself in Kashmir, though the princes were weak and helpless and the material prosperity of the valley was on the decline.

"Then at last Shah Mir, a powerful condottiere who had come to Kashmir from Swat, rose in rebellion against Kota Rani, the widow of the last Hindu king and disposed her of after marrying her. Thus he established Muhammadan rule in Kashmir in 1339 A.D. The change marked no revolution either in foreign relations of Kashmir or in its internal conditions. The administration, as before remained in the hands of the official class, the Brahmins, for whom change of religon presented no advantage and who accordingly retained their inherited status, together with their literary traditions. "The fanatical bigotry of a single Muhammadan ruler, Sikandar Butshikan (the idol-breaker), helps only to put in a stronger relief the tolerance, or may we say the indifference of princes who preceded or followed him".

"Under the long and exceptionally peaceful rule of Sikandar's son, Zainulabidin (1420-70 A.D.) who was a patron of Sanskrit learning and an occasional pilgrim to the ancient Tirthas (places of pilgrimage) of the valley, Hindu traditions distinctly reasserted themselves, while the country enjoyed something like a return of its old prosperity."

He was followed by several weak sultans, during whose rule Kashmir once more became the scene of long and continued strife. At last Akbar's forces crossed into the valley and brought Kashmir under the Moghul rule and thus brought peace to this valley. Akbar built the wall

round the fort, laid out some gardens and gave impetus to the Shawl industry. Jehangir and his queen loved Kashmir and beautified it by laying out a number of gardens. Auranzeb once more introduced the element of intolerance. After the decline of the Moghul empire, Kashmir came under the Afghan rule and consequently suffered under its tyranny.

The last of the Afghan rulers was defeated by Sikhs who ruled Kashmir until 1846 A.D. when Maharaja Gulab Singh secured its sovereignty from the British by the Treaty of Amritsar. Thus Kashmir came under the Dogra rule. Maharaja Gulab Singh, by dint of his statesmanship and valour, not only consolidated his rule but also extended its borders after his conquest of Ladakh and Gilgit. During the time of his son and successors, the state was put on the path of peace and progress. Communication was improved, some educational and medical institutions were opened and some land reforms were enacted, which improved to some extent the lot of the peasantry.

After Independence in 1947 and the partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan, Kashmir acceeded to India, but soon after armed raiders from Pakistan invaded it and occupied a part of Kashmir. To avoid war with Pakistan India appealed to the United Nations' Organisation to get aggression vacated. A Cease Fire was accepted by India and Pakistan but in 1965 Pakistan again invaded Kashmir. After a brief war the two countries agreed at Tashkent to work together for the promotion of peace and good will. But the spirit was short lived. In 1971, the military dictatorship of West Pakistan tried to suppress the people of their Eastern wing after a massive election mandate in favour of the Bengalis right for autonomy. The brutal suppression resulted in large waves of

refugees fleeing their hearths and homes in East Bengal and seeking refuge and shelter in India. Pakistan, then launched an aggresive war on India on the 3rd of December, 1971 which ended with surrender of Pakistan army before the combined command of the Indian Army and Mukti Bahini of Bangladesh, which then emerged as an independent country.

India, then, unilaterally declared a ceasefire on its Western front also on the 17th December 1971. The two countries later entered into negotiations and an agreement, known as Simla Accord was signed by the Prime Minister of India and the President of Pakistan on 2nd July, 1972. This provided for bilateralism and the settlement of mutual problems by peaceful means. It augurs well for the peace, stability and development of the sub-continent.

Ancient Architecture: The valley of Kashmir has been "the holy land of the Hindus and there is rarely a village which cannot show some relic of antiquity. Curious stone miniatures of old temples and carved images heaped in grotesque confusion by some spring, are met every where. But stupendous ruins of some ancient temples still exist, such as Martanda, Narastan, Payer, Boniar, Narannag, Avantipura, Pattan, the plinth of the existing temple on the Shankaracharya hill and many other ruins, described elsewhere, tell the story of the great architectural heritage of Kashmir. These may be of great interest to a tourist who is interested in archaeology. About their architecture, the Bate's Gazetteer has this to say, "The architectural remains of Kashmir are perhaps the most remarkable of the existing monuments of India, as they exhibit undoubtedly traces of the Greek influence....the Kashmirian fanes are distinguished by the graceful elegance of their outlines, by the massive boldness of their parts, and by the happy propriety of their decorations. They cannot indeed vie with the

severe simplicity of the Parthenon, nor with luxuriant gracefulness of the monuments of Lyscicrates, but they possess great beauty, different, yet their own."

"The characteristic features of the Kashmirian are its lofty pyramidal roofs, its trefoil doorways covered with pyramidal pediments and the great width of its intercolumniation. The Grecian pediment is very low, and its roof exceedingly flat, the Kashmirian pediment, on the contrary, is extremely lofty and its roof high, the former adapted for sunny and almost rainless climate, while the latter is equally well suited to a rainy and snowy climate.

In the Kashmirian architecture the great width of the interval (which is constant) is perhaps the most characteristic feature of the order. Indeed, I have a suspicion that the Kashmirian style was well known to the Greeks, for an intercolumniation of four diameters, and interval seldom, if ever, used by themselves was called Araiostyle, a name which would appear to refer to an intercolumniation common enough to the Hindus or Eastern Aryas...... As a whole, I think that the Kashmirian architecture, with its noble fluted pillars, its vast columnades, its lofty pediments, and its trefoiled arches, is fully entitled to be classed as a distinct style. I have therefore ventured to call it the "Arian order" a name to which it has a double right, firstly because it was the style of the Aryas or Arians of Kashmir, and secondly, because its intercolumniation are always of four diameters, an interval which Greeks called Araiostyle.

Medieval Architecture: About the medieval architecture of Kashmir Dr. Goetz has this to say "The mosques and Ziarats (tombs of saints) of Kashmir, seem to be an adaptation of the preceding wooden architecture of the last medieval period: cubic block houses, with a low pyramidal grass roof and 'mazina' on top, the spire of which is obviously, an adaptation of the Buddhist 'Chhatravali and

Hindu Shikhara'.

Although the wooden architecture is prominently associated with Muhammadan rule in Kashmir, there is no doubt that the mode had an ancient history. Even in Hindu and Buddhist periods, religious and secular buildings were constructed in timber, as is evidenced by several references in the Rajataranjini".

Fauna and Flora

Fauna: Kashmir offers great attraction to a sportsman as it possesses a large and varied animal kingdom. For a hunter there are snow leopards, barasingha, black bear, brown bear, markhor, ovis ammon (wild sheep), black bear, ibex, otter, weasel, musk deer, fox, marmot, etc. etc. Shooting season for big game lasts throughout the year except for (1) snow leopard, (2) musk deer, (3) brown bear, and (4) Kashmir stag, which have been declared as protected animals. Besides, there is a great variety of small game such as snow partriges, Ram chakor, (snow-cock) monal pheasant (Sunal) and pheasants etc. etc.

Habitat and some particulars about some big game animals are given below:

Panther: Kashmiri name—Seh. These are not restricted to forests. They more often prey on dogs and domestic animals. They generally follow beaten tracks of animals through the forest.

Snow leopard: Kashmiri name—Shena Seh. In summer generally found above the tree-line in rocks and cliffs and in winter follows the game to lower altitudes and prowls about villages in the lower foothills.

Brown bear: Kashmiri name—Gura Haput. Inhabits bare, open peaks high above the snowline in summer.

Black bear: Kashmiri name—Haput. In summer they may be found near the limits of treeline, 10,000 to 12,000 ft. In autumn maize fields in the foothills are a great attraction for them.

Ovis Orientalis: *Shapu or Urial:* Found mostly in Ladakh—Inhabits steep grassy hill slopes above forests.

Ovis Ammon: Ladakhi name—Nayan, Lives in wilderness and desolate plains and low undulating hills. They are migratory and wander wherever food and water is to be got. In summer they are found above 15,000 ft.

Bharal or Blue Sheep: Ladakhi name—Na or sna. Found in Ladakh and Zanskar. Seeks higher altitudes (16,000 ft) in summer and rarely below 13,000 ft in winter.

Markhor: Ladakhi name—Raphoche. Inhabits Pir Pantsal and Kazinag ranges. Lives in dense birch and pine forests whose grassy glens form their grazing grounds. Goes seldom higher than the snow-line. The ground they like best is precipitous crag and rock where they feel more secure from attack.

Serew: Kashmiri name—Ramu, Halj, Salabhir. Favours an elevation between 6,000 and 10,000 ft. Lives in recesses of thickly wooded gorges whose boulder strewn slopes and shallow caves give shelter from weather.

Kashmir Stag: Hangul, Barasingh. Limited to north side of the Kashmir Valley and adjacent valleys. Essentially a forest animal, roams from forest to forest to find good grazing. Spends winter in lower levels and summer on heights. Found in large herds in Dachhigam game preserve.

Ibex: Ladakhi name—Skin or Sekin. Kashmiri Kale. Favourite ground higher elevations above the treeline. Lives in the shelter and security of precipitous cliffs and ridges.

Musk deer: Kashmiri name roos, rous. Generally

met in birch forests above the zone of pines. At times they come to lower levels but always keep in thick cover.

Wolves: In barren uplands of Kashmir and Ladakh, they live as nomads, coming down to valleys in winter, migrating with game and grazing flocks to the snowline in summer. Holes, caves, cavities in rocks provide them with shelter in winter and thickets of reeds and scrub with a refuge in summer.

Red fox: Kashmiri name Loh—found in Kashmir and Ladakh, common in brushwood and cultivated land.

Lynx: Kashmiri name Patsalov. Found in Kashmir and Ladakh. Shelters in dense cover provided by scrub, patches of reed and tall grass and forests.

Common Otter: Kashmiri name—Kula Oddur. Generally makes its lair among rocks and boulders, in hollows, beneath the roots of trees growing by the water edge or lies up in reed beds, ferns, brakes and bushes. In summer many others go up the streams and torrents. Their upward movement coincides with the upward migration of carp and other fish for purposes of spawning. In winter they come down to the lower streams.

Stone martin: Inhabits both forests and barren heights above the treeline, sheltering in hollows in trees, under logs, among rocks, or in holes in the ground.

Marmot: Kashmiri name—Drin. Found between 8,000 and 14,000 feet. Lives on grasses and seeds of various plants. When scenting danger utter a loud whistling scream.

Water Birds

A large variety of ducks visit Kashmir in winter and some of them also breed here, in Hokarsar and Haigam lakes. The shooting season begins from the 1st of September and lasts till the 31st of May. The game

birds found in large flocks on its lakes are ducks and geese, mallard, pochard, gadwall, teal, snipe, grebe, coot, water-hen, white-eyed duck, dabachick, pintail, shoveller etc. etc. Haigam, Hokarsar and Mirgund are protected areas for small game shooting. Shooting in these areas is permitted only on Sundays. Special permission for shooting in these areas for other days may be obtained from the Game Warden, Srinagar.

Fish

An angler finds the cold water streams such as Sindh, Lidder, Bringhi, Arapat and many of its mountain tarns such as Gangabal, Nundkol, Visnusar etc. abounding in rainbow and brown trout. He can also find Mahaseer which comes up to breed at Ningal in June-July. The rivers are also full of various kinds of country fish. Mirror carp has recently been introduced and can now be found in abundance in the lakes and rivers.

Trout was introduced into Kashmir in 1899 and have done better here. They grow to big sizes and provide excellent sport for anglers. Fishing trout waters are mainly divided into three categories:

(1) "Sindh, Lider and Kishenganga are foaming torrents in the afternoons during the months of May, June and July with occasional gentle currents round the boulders where the big trout lie. These rivers are best in April, August and September."

(2) "The second type of water include Bringhi, Erin, Madmati, Kulgam, Ferozpur where fishing is good throughout the season."

(3) "The third type include small springfed streams

like Verinag, Isthal, etc. which provide excellent sport throughout the season."

The main streams are divided in different beats on daily or weekly basis:

(a) The seasonal licence holders are entitled to fish in all the trout waters open to fishing once in the season provided they are available.

(b) Half season Licence holders are entitled to fish any five weekly beats and 12 daily beats open to fishing once in the season provided they are available.

Booking of all waters commences on the 2nd January. **The Trout Fishing Season** extends from 15th March to 30th September for snowfed streams and from 1st April to 15th October for springfed streams. For further information apply to the Director of Fisheries, J & K Government, Tourist Reception Centre, Srinagar.

Birds:

Kashmir offers a vast field of study for a lover of birds. Numerous beautiful birds come here to breed in summer. Amongst them are golden oriole, thrushes, finches, bee eaters, tits, starts, dippers, flycatchers, swallows, wood peckers and the like.

Flora:

For a collector of flowers Kashmir is a real paradise. In summer the meadows of Kashmir are literally a mass of a vast variety of flowers of varied colours, such as primulas, anemones, crocusses, gentians, aquilegia, saxifraga, marsh marigold, diasies, roses, purple and

white irises, geraniums, potentiallas and numerous kinds of ferns etc. besides some rare flowers such as blue poppy. Its forests and meadows abound in medicinal herbs, such as Kuth (costus spacious) etc.

Fruit:

A fruit lover will find many sorts of sweet délicious and juicy fruits such as cherries, apricots, plums, peaches, strawberries etc in early summer and pears, pomegranates, apples, quince apples, walnuts and almonds etc. in late summer and autumn.

Industries:

Kashmir artizans have acquired great fame all over the world for their fine workmanship and skill. There is a great variety of handicrafts, such as, woodcarving, papier machie, embriodery, silver work, carpets and gabha-making, silk-rearing, silkweaving and shawl weaving.

The history of the Shawl is very interesting. Blankets and cloth from Pashmina (the fine wool of the Tibetan goat) were made in Kashmir since very early times, but Syed Ali Hamdani is said to have given an impetus to it in 1378 A.D. How it got the name 'Shawl' is also interesting. Nagz Beg, a resident of Khokand, in Central Asia, came to Kashmir with his master Mirza Haider Dughlat. He got a piece of Pashmina, 1½yds wide, prepared and presented it to his master, who inquired what it was. A 'Shawl' replied Nagz, as the people of Khokand called a blanket a 'shawl'. Since then it has been named 'shawl'.

Embroidered or 'Amlkar shawl' also owes its origin to the fertile imagination of a Kashmiri artizan, Ala Baba. It is said that a fowl walked on a white sheet of cloth and left the imprint of its dirty feet on it. He embroidered the spots with coloured thread, and the cloth looking prettier

with this design came to be manufactured in large quantities.

Akbar was very fond of shawls. He ordered four kinds to be made: first 'Toos Asal' from the wool of a goat of this name, whose natural colour is generally grey. These shawls are incomparable for their lightness, warmth and softness. The second kind is "Safed Alich' which is also called "Tarahdar'. The natural colour of this wool is white and black. The third is 'Zardozi', 'Gulibetun'. 'Keshdeh', 'Kulya', Bandinun', 'Chheet', 'Alich' and 'Purzdar'. Fourth, from short pieces, he got made, long enough for 'Jamas". In course of time shawls captured the imagination of the fashionable world and were in great demand in Iran, Turkey and Europe.

The 'shawl' reached Europe in an interesting manner. A blind man Sayyid Yehyah from Baghdad visited Kashmir in 1796 A.D. Abdullah Khan, the Afghan Governor gave him a present of a 'shawl'. The Sayyid presented it to the Khedive of Egypt. Soon after, Napoleon came to Egypt and the Khedive presented it to him. He sent it to France, where it attracted the fashionable world. There was a great demand. 40,000 looms worked to fulfil the demand. Quantities of wool imported, varied from 1000 to 2000 maunds. The price of the 'shawl' varied from Rs. 60/- to Rs. 2,000/- and that of the 'Jamwar' from Rs. 200/- to Rs. 7,000/-.

Moorecroft who visited Kashmir in 1820-22 A.D. engaged himself in finding out the process of 'Shawl' manufacturers, so that they might be produced in England. He therefore made a through study of this art, and the detailed description of the various processes in the making of 'Shawl' were sent by him to manufacturers in England. This was the beginning of the 'Paisely Shawls' which fulfilled the aims of this enterprising traveller, namely, the destruction of this ancient and flourishing shawl industry

of Kashmir, and its elimination from the European market.

Another great industry is carpet making. It owes its origin to Zain-ul-abidin. He brought carpet weavers from Samarkand and settled them in Kashmir. But the industry decayed in course of time. During the reign of Jehangir, a Kashmiri Muslim, named Akhund Rehunma, while on his way back from Haj. visited Andijan in Iran where carpets were manufactured. He picked up the art and restarted the industry in Kashmir. It has flourished ever since.

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CHAPTER I

INSTRUCTIONS TO TOURISTS

Kashmir

Tourists intending to visit Kashmir can travel by air direct from Delhi or from Amritsar or Jammu. They can also travel by railway to Jammu where comfortable buses and cars are available to take them to Srinagar, the summer capital of the State which is about 290 km away towards the north. This distance can be covered in a single day. Good hotels, Dak Bungalows and cafetaria are available en route at Kud and Batote, where the buses generally stop for meals. Other stations on the road, such as Ramban and Banihal also have Dak Bungalows and hotels.

Jammu

Jammu, the winter capital of the State, is now the Railway terminus. It is picturesquely situated on the summit of the first sloping ridge that rises from the plains of the Punjab. The high gilded spires of its many temples, glittering under the bright sun, make it quite conspicuous. This small city has a history that dates back to the epic and Puranic times. The tourist will do well to stop here and visit some of the places of interest described below.

The two lakes, Mansar and Siroinsar, in the east of Jammu city, are places of great attraction for the tourists and have given to its inhabitants the name 'Dogra' which is a corruption of the sanskrit "Dogirath"—two lakes. Out of 22 Dogra states, which comprised the hilly state, Jammu seems to have been the most important and influential. These now form the Province of Jammu of which

Jammu city is the headquarter.

These Dogra principalities are said to have been founded by Rajput adventurers from Budh and Delhi, about the time of Alexander's invasion, when they moved up to oppose the Greeks.

The earliest mention of Jammu is in connection with Timur's invasion in 1298 A.D. when the Rajputs combined to oppose him. In Moghul times they seem to have carried on as feudatories of the emperors. Sangram Dev is mentioned in 'Tuzki Jehangiri' as the Raja of Jammu, with a 'mansab' of 1500 personnel and 1000 horses.

Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasion gave the opportunity to Ranjit Dev to extend his territory and establish his authority over all the hill States between the Chenab and the Ravi. The independence of this chief was shortlived, as in 1780 A.D. Janda Singh of Bhangi Misl, led a strong army against him and returned only after extracting a tribute from him. Finally in 1803, under orders from Ranjit Singh, Bhai Hukam Singh conquered the whole province and thus it came under the Lahore Government.

It was in this war of 1803 that Gulab Singh who was only 16 years old at the time, gave a display of his valour, which was reported to Maharaja Ranjit Singh who then took him into his service. In course of time by dint of his remarkable bravery and diplomatic skill, he not only rose to the highest position in the Government, but also retrieved the principality of Jammu for his family. He then extended its borders.

According to legend, Jambulochan, the brother of Bahulochan, while hunting, saw a tiger and a goat drinking water from the same pool near what is Jammu now. Considering the place as auspicious, he laid the foundation of the new city here and called it Jammu Nagri, and then transferred his capital to it from the Bahu Fort which

stands on the river Tawi opposite the present city.

Jammu is now fast expanding. It has a population of 1,56,000 and is a lively business centre. A tourist while halting here can find good accommodation in one of the many hotels, besides the Tourist Reception Centre (Dak-Bungalow) which is under Government management

Motel: To provide accommodation, comfort and other facilities to the motorists and tourists, the I.T.D.C. has constructed a Motel at Jammu. It is located on the high-way to Kashmir, at the edge of the city, convenient for visiting places of tourist interest and pilgrimage in the Jammu Province.

The three storeyed building has a modern look. Each of the 50 rooms (many of them air-conditioned) has a balcony, commanding a panoramic view of the Tawi valley, the Jammu town and the rising hills. It has an air-conditioned bar and a restaurant, providing international cuisane and Kashmiri delicacies.

Jammu has many temples of which the Raghunath temple with its gilded spires visible from far away is the most prominent. Pilgrims to Vaisnov Devi can get accommodation in one of the many Dharamsala inside the premises of the temple. The old palaces *Mandi Mubarak* (the old Secretariat) command an excellent view of the Tawi. These were built by Raja Gagey Singh (1673-1703 A.D.) who transferred the seat of his Government from the Purani Mandi to these palaces. The famous and holy shrine of Vaisnov Devi is 64 km away to the north of Jammu. More than two lakh people from all over India come to worship at the shrine throughout the year, mostly during the months from September to December. The shrine is in a narrow cave from which a streamlet of icecold water flows out. Devotees offer coconuts, wrapped in red cloth, and money as offering.

Buses take the pilgrim to Katra, 53 km from Jammu. Then they climb on foot or on horseback up the Trikata to a height of about 6000 ft. and then descend to the cave on the other side of the mountain. There are Dharamsalas for the pilgrims to stay in where blankets are loaned out by the Dharmartha Trust, free of charge, on depositing some money as security. Accommodation is also available at Katra at the Tourist Centre.

Mansar is a beautiful small lake 40 km away in the east of Jammu. Legend has it that Bir Bahu shot an arrow from Mansar which came out at Siroinsar another lake 24 km in the east of Jammu. Water gushed out of the holes and the two lakes were thus formed. The Government has developed these two lakes as holiday resorts.

Sanasar: is a beauty spot 19 km from the Patni top on the National Highway to Kashmir. It has a tourist hut.

Sudh Mahadev is a place of worship, a few km from the Patni top towards the south. It is the source of the Depak stream, which disappears in its bed after flowing down a few km. A Trishul (trident) and a mace, called Bhima's mace are the objects of worship here. The pilgrimage takes place on the fullmoon-day of Sawan (July-August).

Mandalekh Shrines are situated in Bhaderwah. Snake Vasaknag is worshipped here. Chelas (disciples) as they are called, when called upon to perform a religious dance. wear iron bells and maces, weighing more than a maund. Then they dance for hours together, till they are possessed, when they are beaten with iron chains, maces and fire. At last when they are at the height of ecstacy an artery of a goat or a sheep is cut open and the Chela sucks every drop of its blood.

Chapter II

SRINAGAR

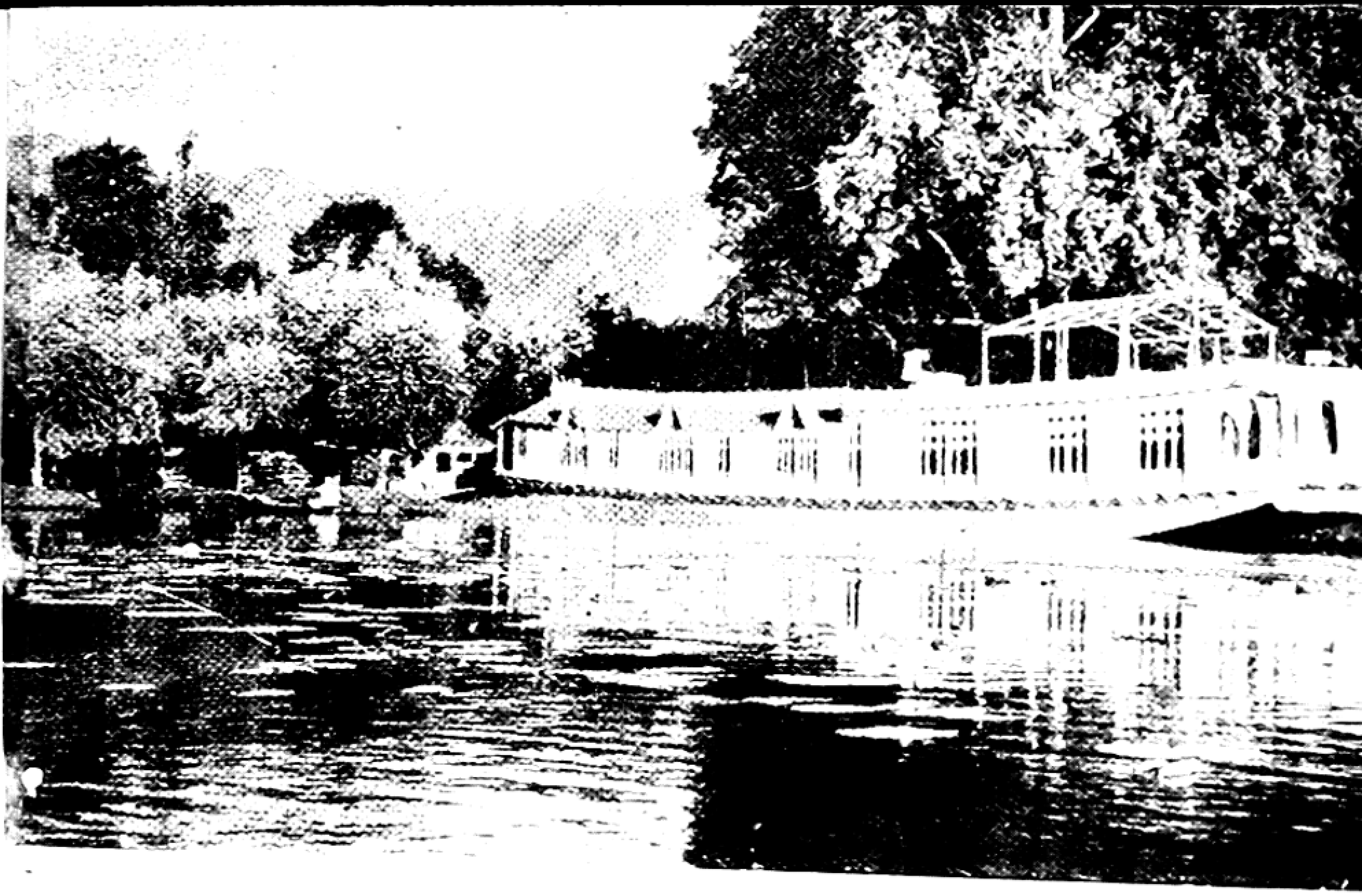
Srinagar 'the city of goddess Lakshmi', with its legendary and historical background has enjoyed the distinction of being the capital of the Happy Vale of Kashmir for more than two thousand years. Kalahana, the author of the Rajatarangini (the stream of Kings of Kashmir) mentions that Srinagari was founded by Ashoka. His son Jaluka extended it beyond Aitagaji and built the shrine of Jyestha-rudra (Jethyar). The position of this old city is marked by the present village of Pandrenthan (Puranaadhisthana) and the cantonment area. The temple dedicated to Siva, by Meruvardhana in the beginning of the 12th century, is still extant there in a well preserved condition. The present city of Srinagar founded by Pravarasena II and known as Pravarapura was practically contiguous to the older city of Srinagri and existed side by side for centuries. The name Pravarapura is also recorded in the Chinese Tang Annals. It is found in the works of Khsemendra and Bilhana, and is still used in the colophones and horos-copes by Brahmins to the present day. Hiuen Tsang who visited the capital in about 631 A.D. found the city already in the position of the present capital. He describes it as being situated along the right bank of the great river Vitasta, extending about four km from north to south and about a km and a half from east to west.

The legend about the founding of Pravarapura is that the king after his return from his conquest desired to found a new city. To ascertain its position, he started at night from Puranaadhistana and was confronted by a Vital (demon)

on the other side of the Mahasarit (Tsuntkula) The Vital spread his bent leg across the stream and invited him to cross over it to his side. The bold king cut off his leg with his dagger and crossed over it to the other side. The demon very much pleased at his boldness, told him that he should build the new city at a site where he would find the measuring line in the morning. He found the line near the foot of Sharika Parbat (Hari-Parbat) and built the city of Pravarapura there. Whatever the significance of the legend, the fact remains to this day that the waters of the Dal Lake are separated from the Tsuntkul by the bent leg shaped Sathu (bund) even now.

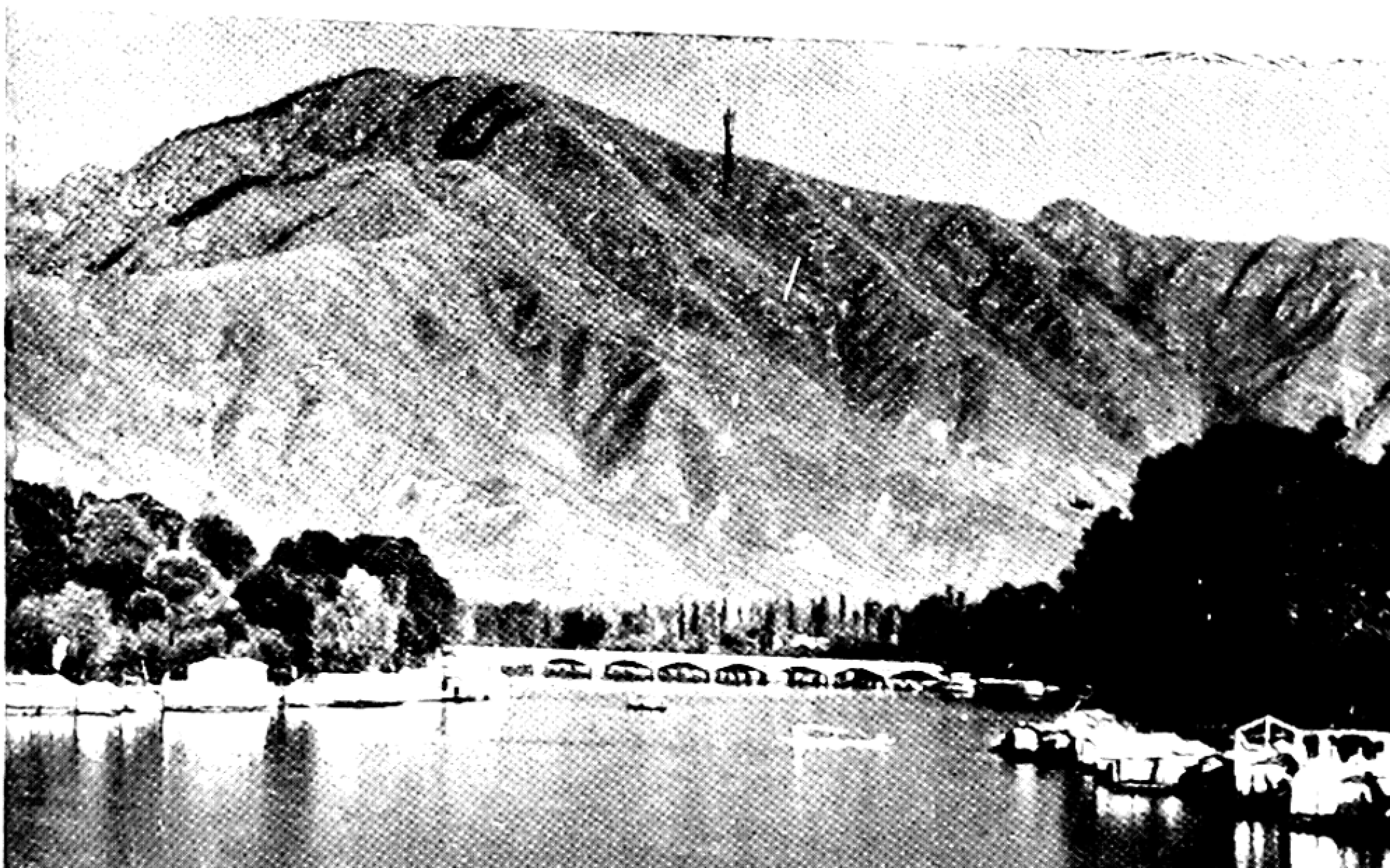
The first shrine erected in this city was the famous Siva Pravarisvara, the bold ruins of which still stand outside the fort near Batchibaran, where the mosque of Bahudin Saheb stands now. The high gate of the old temple still exists though its roof has disappeared. Kalhana describes the city as situated on the right bank of the river. He also refers to the magnificient temples with which the successive kings had adorned Pravarapura. One can get an idea of the number of imposing structures from the massive remains which still meet us in every part of Srinagar. This ancient stone material has been used to form the plinths of numerous buildings and the high embankments which now line the course of the river. The profusion and the imposing dimensions of these stones must impress even a superficial observer with the architectural splendour of ancient Srinagar.

It cannot be said with certainty when the city was extended to the left bank but king Ananta (A.D. 1028-63) was the first to transfer his royal residence to it. That it has enjoyed the honour of being the first town ever since, is due to its natural advantageous position. Occupying a place close to the true centre of the valley, it has facilities



A Houseboat Moored under a Chinar on Dal Lake

River Jehlum—Zabarvan in the Background





Srinagar Under Snow

River Vitasta



which no other site could offer. The river which flows through its middle, provides all the year round the most convenient route for trade and traffic both up and down the river. The Dal and the Anchar lakes which flank it provide an abundant supply of products which go a long way to feed its large population. It used to be on the great trade route from and to Central Asia. It was also above the flood level. Situated as it is with mountains behind, flanked by lakes and a wide river in front, Srinagar was in a strong defensive position. Lalitaditya, Jayapida, Avantivarmana and Shankaravaramana attempted to shift the capital to Parihaspura, Jayapura, Avantipura and Pattan respectively but the ruins of these cities tell the sad tale of their failure.

The present city of Srinagar with a large population of 4,15,000 is spread over some 144Sq. km. Due to its industrial expansion and further growth of population, it is expected to occupy more than 200 km soon. The river Vitasta (Jehlum), with hundreds of houseboats moored to its banks above the first bridge and numerous barges and picturesque ancient and modern buildings of all sorts, high and minaretted mosques and spiral temples on either bank, present a unique picture. A joy ride down the river, in a spring-seated shikara and propelled by a couple or more boatmen is most interesting and enjoyable on a fine day.

Houseboats: graded into special, first and second classes etc. with sanitary fittings and other modern amenities, provide good accommodation to the visitor during his sojourn in Srinagar. Their owners provide both board and lodging. There are also many good hotels, catering to all sorts of visitors from the very rich to the middle classes. It is also proposed to build a super-hotel on the bank of the Dal Lake, which will satisfy the needs of its growing

international tourist trade. Vegetarian and non-vegetarian food is provided.

Government Tourist Reception Centre—the terminus of the bus and air services also provides rooms and accommodation in tents for a couple of days or more till the tourists make alternative arrangements of their own. All sorts of information regarding hotels, houseboats, bus services to various places of interest in the valley, licences for fishing and hunting etc. etc. can be obtained from the Directorate of Tourism and other offices located here, so that the tourrists get all sort of information and help that may be needed by them.

While in Srinagar, the tourist is recommended to visit the following places of historical and other interest.

The Moghul gardens: These are famous all over the world, and a visit to them should be considered as one of the *musts.* The idea of landscape gardening, with its lotus ponds, is very ancient in India and is said to have been carried by the Buddhist monks from Kashmir to Central Asia, China and Japan where it was transformed and perfected into a most lovely art. In Central Asia and Iran, the system of carrying running water through artificial cascades and scheme of fountains was introduced in the garden design.

The Moghuls from Babar to Shah Jehan were great, lovers of gardens. Akbar, who brought Kashmir under his rule, found the country resembling his original home (Samarkand and Fargana) and set about laying out a garden. Jehangir and his art-minded queen, Noor Jehan excelled all others in laying out gardens in Kashmir. To the Moghuls we owe the world famous Shalamar, Nishat, Achhabal and Verinag. Shah Jehan improved on these and added a few terraces to Shalamar.

Shalamar: It lies 18 km to the east of Srinagar and

can be approached by car, bus or boat. The road runs along the most beautiful and lovely Dal Lake. Buses run daily between Srinagar and the gardens and special services are arranged on Sundays to meet the rush of tourists to the gardens, which look best with cascades running down the chutes, and fountains playing among the velvety lawns and flowerbeds on either side of the stream.

Shalamar, the Hall of Love, is said to have been a villa, built by Pravrasena II, the founder of the present city of Srinagar. He used to stay here when on a visit to Sukhswami, a saint living near Harvan. The villa disappeared in course of time but a village of the same name sprang up in its place. In 1619 A.D. Jehangir ordered a garden to be laid out at this spot, calling it 'Farah Bakhsh' (delightful). In 1727 A.D. Zafarkhan, a governor during the reign of Shah Jehan, made an extension to it and called it 'Faiz Bakhsh((Bountiful).

The garden is 590x200 yards and is arranged into four terraces, rising one above the other. A canal, lined with polished stones and supplied with water from Harvan, and also connected with reservoirs, runs through the middle of the garden. The fourth terrace, by far the best, was the private part of the garden, where ladies resided. "A magnificient pavilion of black stones, raised in the middle of the tank and supported on each side by a row of six elaborately carved black marble polygonal fluted pillars used to be a banquetting hall. The effect must have been exceedingly charming when at night the fountains played and cascades ran down merrily and reflected the light from thousands of multicoloured lamps that illuminated the pavilion and the garden around it."

For the entertainment of Tourists in the evenings, the I.T.D.C. has organised a Son Et Limiere show here, depicting the life of the Moghul Emperor Jehangir and his queen

Noor Jahan.

Harvan: This place of historical interest is about three and a half km from the Shalimar garden and lies on the slope of the hill to the east of it. It is identified with ancient Sadardhavana (a wood of six arhats), where according to Kalahana the well known Buddhist teacher Nagarjuna had his residence. On the hill-side south of the present village, remarkable remains of ancient ornamented brick pavements have come to light. The excavations are preserved and some of the tiles found there throw enough light on the dress of the people, which clearly shows Central Asian influence, such as loose trousers and Turkoman caps or close fitting turbans, and large earrings etc.

Water reservoir: is about two km further on and an ideal place for picnics.

Dachhigam Nullah: It is a game sanctuary beginning from the upper end of the reservoir and covering the mountain slopes on either side of the Nullah. There is a rest house at Drapahama, which can be visited on permits issued by the Government Tawaza Department. It is the home of Barasingha. Brown bear and leopards can also be found there, besides other smaller game.

Burzahom: A museum will be opened next summer at Burzahom, 24 km north-east of Srinagar, where the Archaeological Survey of India will display a variety of antiquities excavated from different pits at the foot of a hill.

It has been suggested that stone-tools found during the course of archaeological excavations at Samba in the Jammu region should also be displayed at Burzahom.

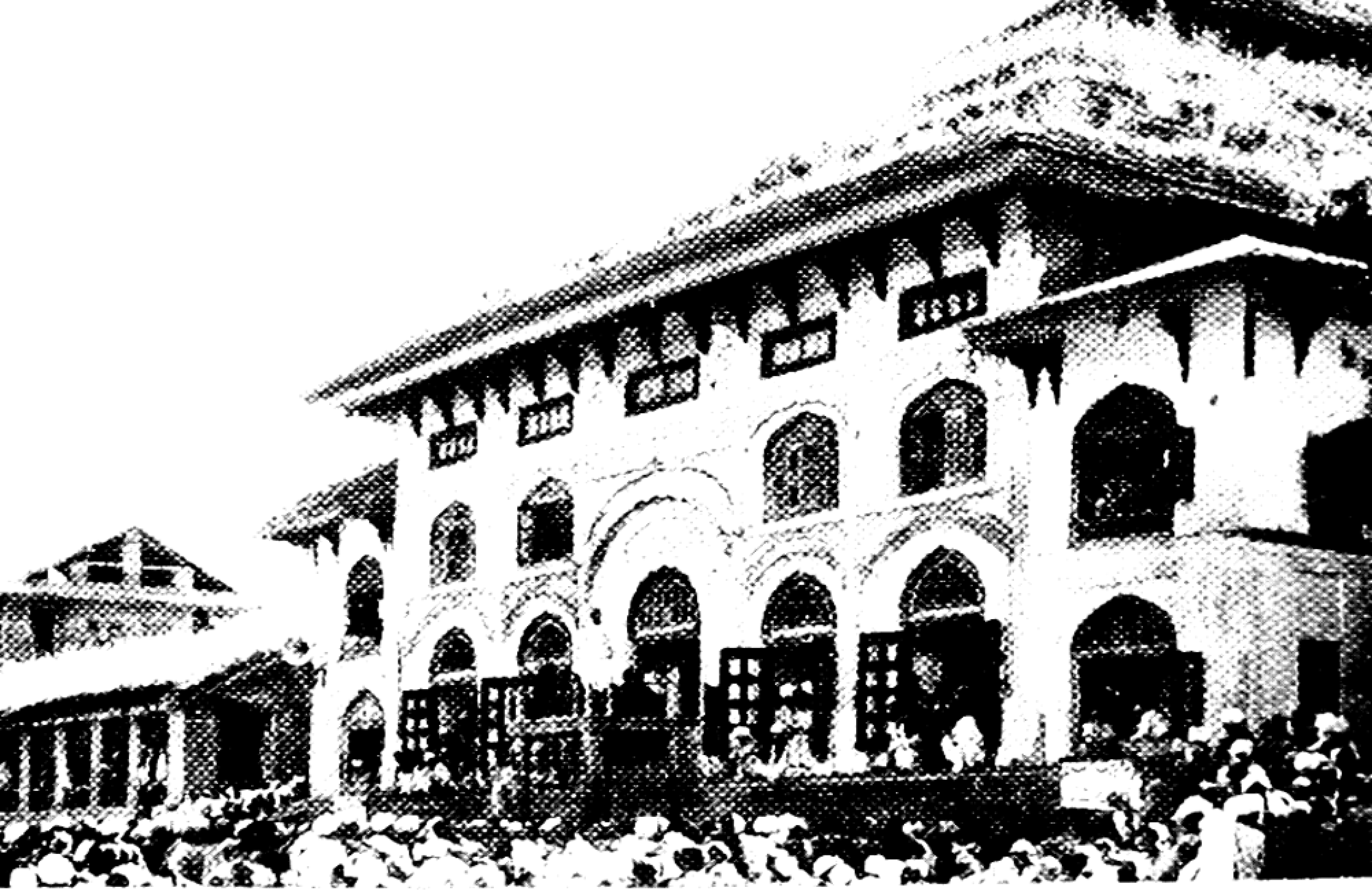
Among the antiquities that the pits at Burzahom have yielded are human and animal skeletons, stone and bone tools, awls, arrow-heads, polished celts and short daggers, pottery and bone polishers. The archaeologists also found



Nishat Garden

Houseboats on Dal Lake





Hazratbal Mosque

Sailing in Nigin Lake



signs of human and animal burials.

About the date of the earliest settlement at Burzahom, archaeologists and other experts have not formed any accurate opinion despite the fact that Burzahom shot into prominence as the cradle of human civilisation in 1960 when digging operations were first started at the megalithic site. It is, however, believed that the earliest settlement is a few thousand years old.

Digging operations which have been completed, reveal four settlements. The earliest settlers prepared dwelling pits which were provided with landing steps. At the bottom of the pits. a layer of ash was found in 1961 which, according to observers, bespeak of human civilisation.

While the second phase of the settlements is characterised by mud structures, the third phase brings out the megalithic stage when the settlers built monuments in memory of their dead. The fourth phase reflects the historical period.

Burzahom, according to some archaeologists, is primarily a Neolithic site capped by a Megalithic complex consising of menhirs raised at different stages. Antiquities relating to the Neolithic Period I (2300 B.C.) are human skeletons, dwelling pits, drains and hearths, stone and bone tools, celts, mace heads and coarse greyware pottery.

The distinctive feature of the Neolithic Period II (1800 B.C. to 600 B.C.) are, among other things, constructed pits and extensive mud platforms indicative of community life. The floors of some dwelling pits have indicated traces of occupation during the Neolithic stage. Among the finds from the floors of these pits are deer horns and bone tools. The lower levels of some of the pits yielded deposits of ash and charcoal with a layer of dark soil. This, some experts feel, indicated that the floors were used for

cooking purposes.

Yet another distinguishing feature of the Neolithic Period II is illustrated by the burials discovered at the site.

Nishat Bagh (the garden of bliss), 11 km to the east of Srinagar, is situated on the bank of the Dal lake with Zabarvan at the back. It commands a magnificient view of the lake and the snowcapped Pir Pantsal mountain range which stands far away to the west of the valley. It is a delight to visit it in the morning, when silvery, rippling waters of the lake and the glistening snowy peaks of the mountains present a unique sight that can be hardly surpassed in its enchanting beauty. In the evening the garden presents a different look, when the rainbow colours of the setting sun are reflected in the calm waters of the lake and bathe its flower beds and the velvety lawns, cascades and fountains in their glory.

Nishat was laid out in 1633 A.D. by Asaf Khan, brother of Noor Jehan. When the Emperor was invited to see it, he got enamoured of it and conveyed a veiled hint to the owner, who was very reluctant to part with it. There upon he ordered the supply of water from the Harvan stream to be cut off, with the result that the flower beds and the young trees began to wither which saddened the heart of Asaf Khan. The gardener, noticing the sorrow of his master, restored the supply of water, secretly. When this came to the notice of the Emperor, he summoned the gardener who confessed the guilt, with the plea that he could not bear the sorrow of his master and said that he was prepared to suffer whatever penalty was imposed on him. But the Emperor admired his loyalty and not only rewarded him but also ordered the supply of water to be restored.

Nishat is 595—369 yards and arranged in 10 terraces. A polished stone-lined canal with a line of tanks runs

through the middle of the garden. Water flows down the successive terraces in cascades and is sprayed out through numerous fountain jets. The canal is bordered with carefully arranged flower beds of different colours and has extensive lawns on either side. It has two pavilions. The lower pavilion is double storeyed and is enclosed on two sides by beautiful latticed windows. The canal runs through the middle of the pavilion. Walks bordered with a line of cypresses and magnificient chenars run on either side of the canal.

Chashma Shahi: Situated eight km to the east of Srinagar and about a mile from the Boulevard, it commands a superb view of the Dal lake, the green valley and the distant mountains beyond. It has the advantage of having a natural spring of pure, cool and sparkling water, known as Chashma Shahi (the Royal Spring). The garden was laid out by the Moghul governor, Ali Mardan Khan, under orders from the Emperor Shah Jehan in 1642 A.D. This miniature garden is 118X42 yards and has three terraces, an aqueduct, water falls and fountains, on the same pattern as other Moghul gardens. The water from the spring, after feeding the fountains passes through the floor of the pavilion and falls to the lower terrace in a fine cascade of some 16 ft. over a polished blackstone chute.

In recent years the garden has been extended by laying out several new terraces towards its west. Another spring of sweet, cool and sparkling water, known as Chasma Sahibi is a couple of furlongs away to wards the south-west.

Milk Colony: The Government Milk Colony is located between Chashma Shahi and the Pari Mahal.

Pari Mahal or Koontilun: lies on a spur of Zabarvan about a mile from Chashma Shahi. It is presumed to have been built by Dara Shikoh to house his school of Sufism and an observatory. The calm and refreshing

atmosphere about the place and the view of the valley and the lake, which it commands, testify to the highly developed aesthetic sense of the Moghuls. This wonderful spot has now been renovated and provided with a restaurant.

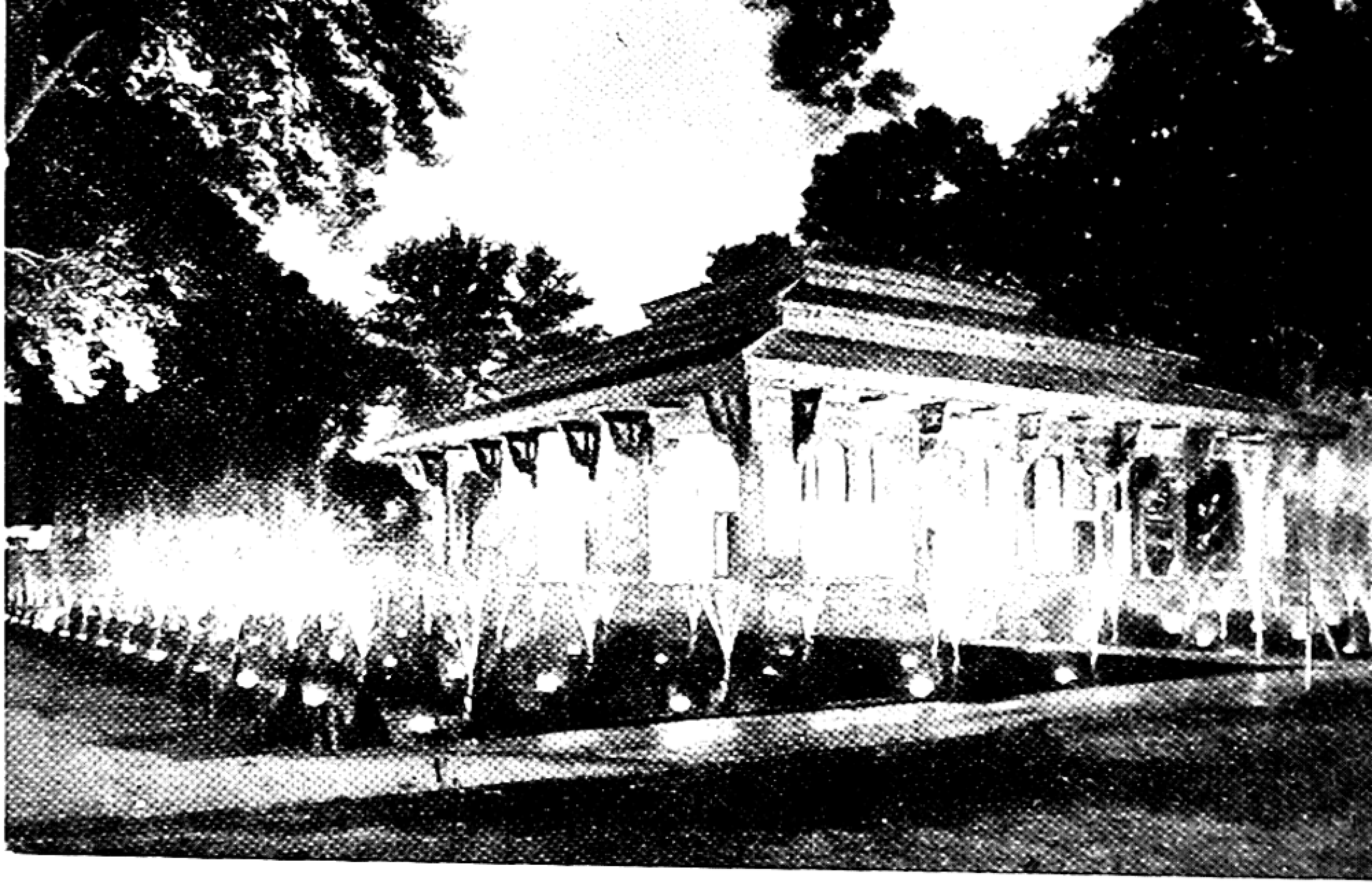
Jeethyer: It is situated at the foot of the spur on which Pari Mahal stands. It is here that god Siva is said to have rescued Parvati (Jeystha) from the Daitas (demons) and married her, and thus took the name of Jyesthesa. Jaluka the son of Ashoka is said to have erected the shrine of Jyestharudra here in the vicinity of his Srinagari (the old Srinagar). The shrine has a spring and a temple.

Oberoi Palace Hotel: It is situated at the foot of the Zabarvan mountain about a furlong from Jethyer. It caters to the upper class tourists. At one time Maharaja Harisingh who built it used to live here. It commands a magnificient view of the lake and its surroundings.

Nehru Park: It is one of the beauty spots opposite Gagribal point. It is at its best in the evening, when thousands of lights all round that part of the lake are reflected in the water around it and add to its charm. Bathing boats anchored in this lake, called the Gagribal lake, provide cloak-rooms also. Swimming and bathing in the lake there, is a pleasant pastime.

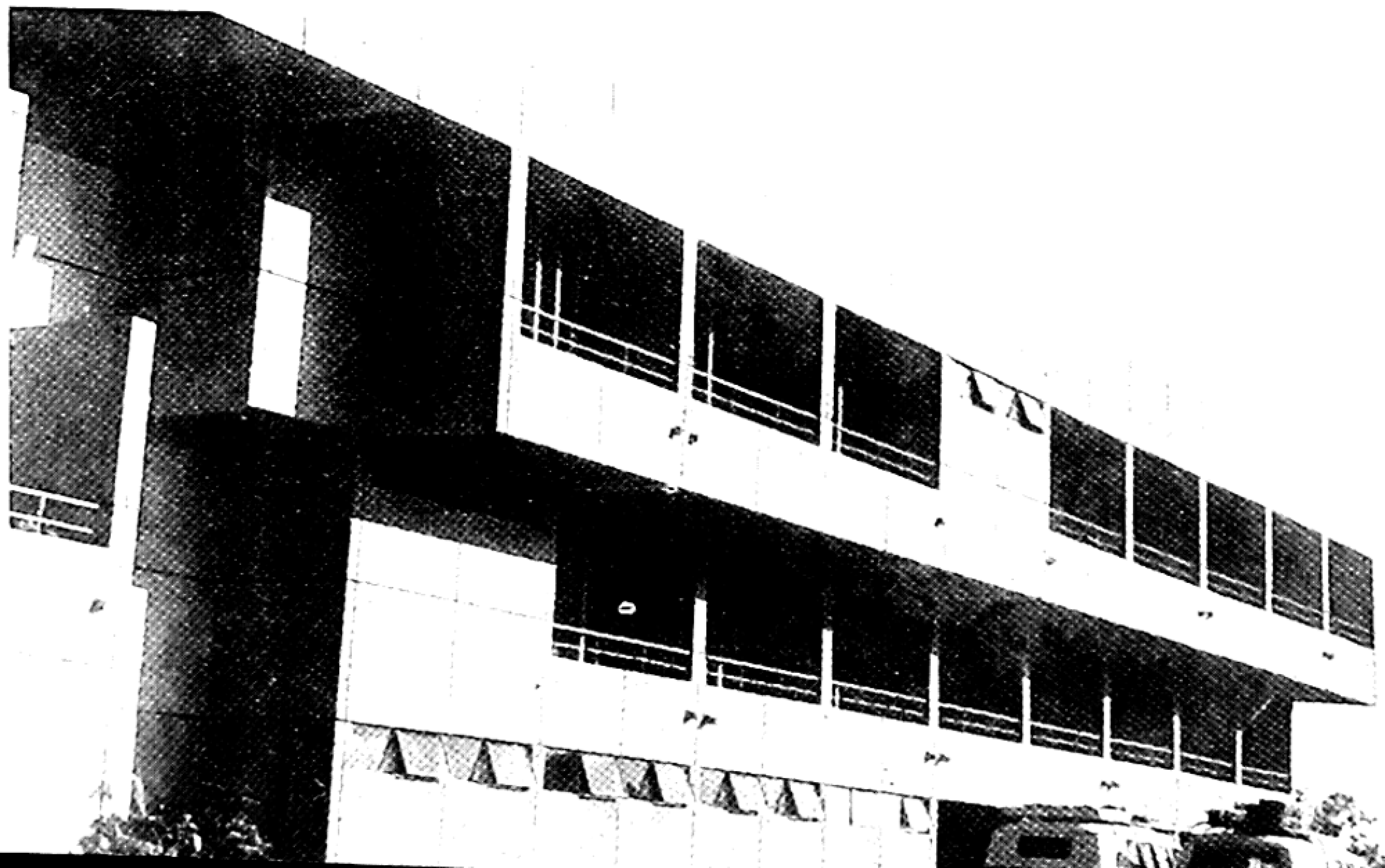
Naseem Bagh: The Garden of Breezes lies on the western shore of the Dal lake. It is a kilometer and a half beyond Hazratbal. Laid out by Shah Jehan, it contains hundreds of magnificient chenars. The saplings are said to have been watered with milk mixed with water. The breezes of the lake blowing through them make it an abode of serene and tranquil peace. Today the Engineering College is situated there.

Hazaratbal: It is the most important Muslim religious place having acquired special sanctity due to its being the repository of a sacred hair of the Prophet, which is dis-



Shalamar Garden

Motel Jammu





Surf Riding in Dal Lake

Enjoying a Swim in the Dal Lake



played to the public on special occasions, such as, on the Prophet's birthday and other similar occasions. The sacred relic was in the possession of Syed Abdullah, a desendant of the Prophet and Mutawali of the Prophet's Shrine in Medina. In 1634 A.D., he came to India and lived at Bijapur in Deccan for 23 years. His son Syed Hamid came to Delhi in 1692 A.D. where he met a Kashmiri trader, who acquired its possession and subsequently died at Lahore. Khawja Madanish brought it to Kashmir. For some time it was kept in the Khanaqah of Niqishband Sahib and finally transferred to the Hazratbal Mosque, which was originally built by Shah Jehan and depicts a curious blend of Moghul and Kashmirian architecture. The wall and porticoes are built in brick masonry, resting on a plinth of dressed stone. The roof in three tiers follows the traditional style of Islamic architecture of Kashmir. The shrine is situated on the western shore of the Dal Lake opposite Nishat Bagh and commands a grand view of the lake and the mountains beyond. The tourists can approach it while on a cruise on the lake or by bus or car from Srinagar, which is 10 km away towards the south.

A new mosque, on the model of the Prophet's Mosque at Medina, at a cost of Rs 30,000,00/- is proposed to be erected to house the sacred hair.

Kashmir University Campus is just a furlong to its west. The extensive grounds on which it is built are a generous donation to the University from Dr. Karan Singh, the Ex-Sadar-i-Riyasat and now Union Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation in the present Cogress Government. Jammu and Kashmir have separate Universities now.

Hari Parbat: The hill of Sharika, situated in the north eastern part of Srinagar, is sacred to the Hindus. The 'Suyambu' rock, 'Chakrisvara' halfway up is worshipped as the seat of the goddess. According to legend, while the

fight between gods and the waterdemon was in progress, Parvati, the consort of Siva, in the form of a Sharika bird flew to Meru mountain, brought back a boulder from it and dropped it at the place where the demon had taken shelter under water, thus shutting him up there for ever. It is one of the most important shrines of the Hindus and is visited by many of them every morning. On festive occasions they come there for worship in thousands.

The hill which is surmounted by a fort, constructed by Atta Mohammad Khan, an Afghan Governor till 1776 A.D., has extensive almond gardens round it. The wall around the hill was built by Akbar in 1592-98 A.D. In spring when blossoms are out, these orchards look most lovely. It is then an ideal place for picnics. Thousands of people of all communities are seen gathered in family groups, sitting under almond trees, with 'Samavars' in their midst, enjoying 'Singhara nuts', 'Kababs' and other delicious foods, while the slightest movement of the refreshing breeze showers pink petals of almond blossoms on them.

Muqdoom Sahib: The 'Ziarat' (tomb) of the saint is situated on the southern slope of Hari-Parbat. This is one of the most popular Muslim shrines. Many people visit this 'Ziarat' every day but on the occasion of the annual 'urs', men, women and children gather here in thousands, from all over Kashmir and offer their prayers.

Akhund Mullah Shah: Just below the 'Ziarat' of Muqdoom Sahib, lies the neglected mosque standing on a scarp of the hill. Its plan is singular—the design of the prayer chamber being repeated on the east side of the courtyard which forms the gateway. On the north and south are arcades, treated in the same way as the wings of the prayer chamber. The stone lotus finial over the pulpit is the only surviving example of its kind in Kashmir. "Constructed of grey granite slabs, over a core of brick

work" notices Percy Brown, "proportion of this building, the simplicity of its surface treatment, the architectural character and manupulation, generally are most commendable. Particularly noticeable are archways, whether plain, pointed or engrained, as they are singularly graceful in their curves, while the scheme of the black wall exterior with a projection to mark the recessed 'Mihrab' in the interior is well conceived. In many respects the ruined and neglected structure is a model in miniature of an appropriate mosque composition."

Chhavin Badshahi: This is one of the most important holy places of the Sikhs. It is situated just outside the Kathi-Darwaza (the southern gate) of the Hari Parbat fort. The shrine holds the Granth Sahib. Guru Har Gobind Singh, the sixth Guru, resided here for sometime.

Hassanabad: An old Shia mosque, built in the time of Akbar and corresponding to the Imambara, is situated about a kilometer from Rainawari near Khojayarbal.

Temple of Siva Pravarasvara: The ruins of this temple erected by Pravarasena II, the founder of Srinagar, lie outside Bachhibaran near the mosque of Bahudin Saheb. One can form an idea of its grandeur from the massive stone slab plinth of the wall and the high gateway which still stand there.

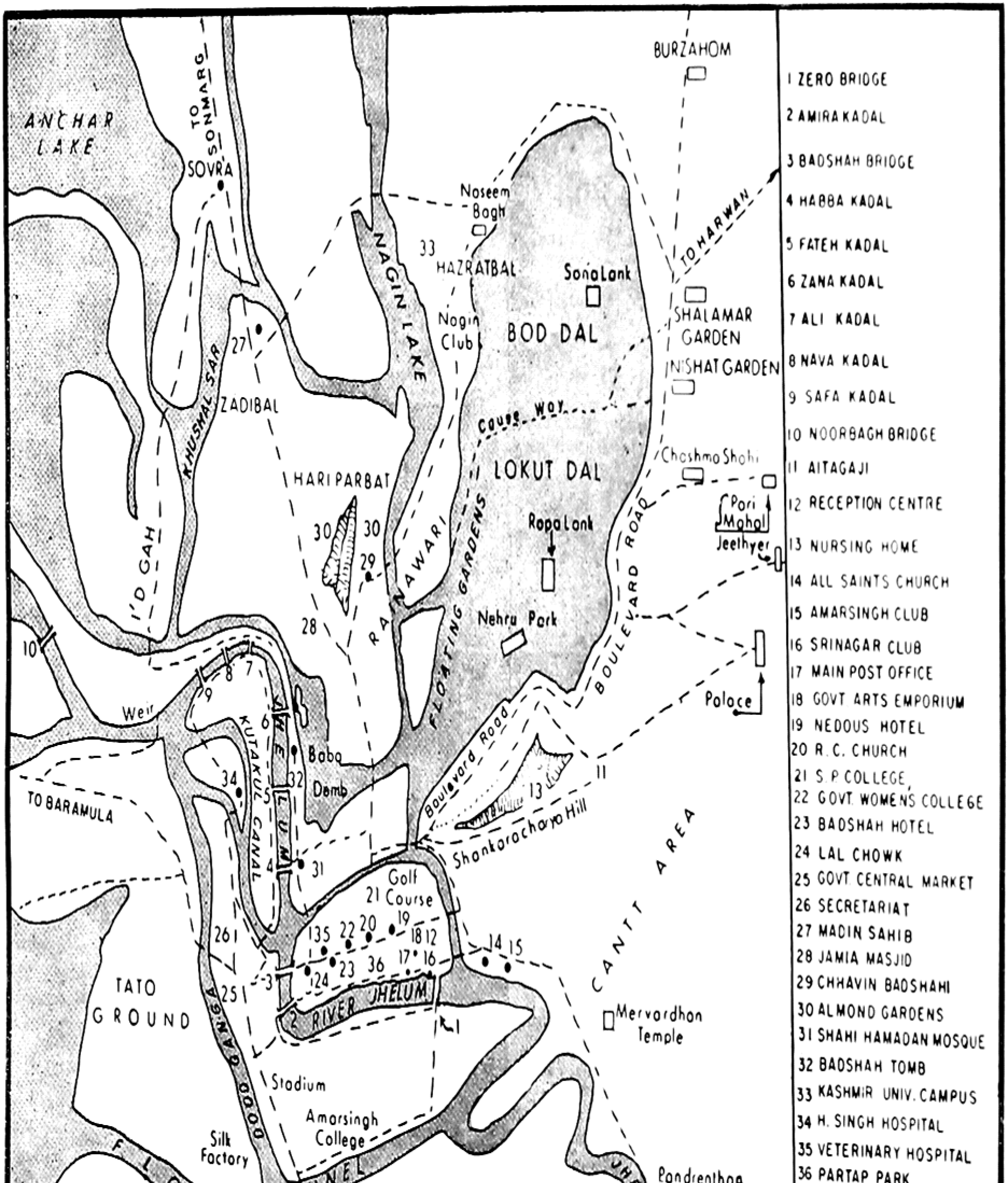
Jami-Masjid: Situated about a furlong from the fort, was originally built by Sultan Sikandar, the iconoclast, in 1400 A.D. from the material brought from the temple of Pravarasvara and is a typical example of Indo-Saracenic style of architecture. It was enlarged by his son, Zain-ul-abidin. Later, destroyed by fire during the reign of Hassan Shah (1472-84 A.D.) who took up its reconstruction, it was completed after his death by his Commander-in-Chief Ibrahim Magrey. It was again destroyed by fire in the time of Jehangir, who then entrusted the work of its re-

construction to the historian architect of Kashmir, Malik Haider Chandura. It once again caught fire during the reign of Aurangzeb in 1674 A.D. and was rebuilt on the original plan of Sikandar. The present mosque was repaired during the reign of Dogra Maharaja Pratap Singh.

Being roughly square-shaped, its northern and southern sides are 384 ft. A large Gothic arch opens from the courtyard on the principal altar, over which the steepled roof is much higher than elsewhere. There are three Pagoda-shaped minarets from which the 'muezzin' calls the faithful to prayer. The roof of the four surrounding cloisters, each 360 ft. long are supported by rows of pillars numbering 328. The pillars under domes and spires are more than 40 ft. high, while those under the main building are 21 ft. in height.

Mosque of Madin Sahib: It is at Zadibal about eight km from Srinagar. It bears an inscription recording its construction in 1444 A.D., during the reign of Zain-ul-abidin. It is built on the plinth of an ancient Hindu temple. The tomb of the saint is celebrated for remarkable tile decoration on its eastern wall. Sir John Marshall, in his note written in 1908 A.D. on archaeological work in Kashmir, remarks, "The tile work is one of the most valuable antiquities which Kashmir possesses. There are only three monuments in India where such tiles can be found."

The mosque of Shahi-Hamdan: It stands on the right bank of the Vitasta just below the third bridge, and may be visited while on a joy ride down the river. It was originally built in 1395 A.D. to commemorate the visit of Mir Sayyid Ali Hammadani. Destroyed by fire in 1479 and 1731 A.D. it was rebuilt by Abdul Barkat Khan in 1732 A.D. and, since then, stands as a landmark in the city. Dr. Goetz says, "The mosque and the Ziarat seems



SRINAGAR
ADAPTED BY COURTESY
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to be an adaptation of preceding wooden architecture of last medieval period: Cubic block houses with a low pyramidal roof and 'Mazina' or top of spire of which is obviously an adaptation of the Buddhist "Chhatravali" and Hindu 'Shikhara'.

The pyramidal roof of the mosque is broken into three equal portions, ending in a graceful steeple, 125 ft. from the ground, with a gilded umbrella at the top. Besides, there are arcades, varandas and porticoes, with their openings filled with lattice work.

The interior consists of a large wooden hall 63'X43' with fourteen cells on its northern and southern sides. The walls are entirely covered with wooden panels of geometrical designs and the ceiling is supported in the centre by four wooden columns ornamented with wooden pieces in fishbone pattern.

Pather Masjid: It stands on the left bank of the river just opposite Shahi Hamdan mosque and is entirely built of lime stone. It was built by queen Noor Jehan in 1620 A.D. Muslims do not however use it for prayers.

Tomb of Zain-ul-abidin: It stands below the fourth bridge on the right bank of the river. "It is built of bricks on the basement of an older temple. In the enclosure are some interesting fragments and inscriptions, the oldest in Kashmir in the Palli characters, discovered by Rev. Abbot. Over the posterior gate there is an inscription in Persian. The principal features of the tomb are glazed tiles and moulded bricks, which are studded at intervals, in exterior walls, the semi-circular brick projections on the drums of the main dome and the moulded brick string courses and sunk panels on the drums of the Cupolas."

The Old Palace: It stands on the left bank of the river just below the newly constructed Badshah Bridge. It was built by Dogra Rajas on the site of Shergadi, formerly the

seat of Government of the Afghan rulers. It now houses some of the Government Departments and the State Legislature.

Central Government Market: It is on the left side of the Baramulla road, hardly a furlong away from the Badshah Bridge. There are many shops dealing in Kashmir handicrafts, namely Pashmina and embroidery goods, silks, woollen and other textiles, papier machie, wood carving pieces and silverware and other products of Kashmir Industry.

The New Secretariat: It is a six storeyed modern building on the right side of the Baramulla road.

The Silk Factory: It is about a couple of km from Amirakadal on the road to the aerodrome. Silk yarn is produced here. It provides woık to some 30,000 people, Printed silk sarees and Tabby silk are alsc manufactured, here.

The Museum: It stands on the left bank, about half a kilometer from Amirakadal. There is a fine collection of stuffed birds and animals, coins, old fabrics, paintings,old manuscripts, and sculptures etc. The public Library is housed at the back of it. It will be shifted to Chashma-Shahi, where a zoo and a botanical garden are being laid out.

Rajbagh Silk Weaving Factory: It is just a furlong upstream above the museum. It is under Government management and produces sarees of various kinds of the famous Kashmir silk.

The Harisingh Hospital: This is the main hospital situated on the road to the weir, about a kilometer from Amirakadal. The Government Medical College also stands within the premises of the hospital.

Government Wollen Mills: It is situated just behind the hospital. It manufactures good woollens of different

design, fabrics for suitings, rugs, raffal shawls. etc.

Silverware, Wood Carving and Papier Machie production centres are generally located on both banks of the river between the third and the fourth bridges.

Idgah: Idgah is a large open ground about five km from Amirakadal towards the north. It is near the seventh bridge. On I'd festivals Muslims congregate here for prayers. On other days it is used by the public as a playground.

Ali Masjid: is a vast prayer hall, the roof of which is supported on a number of wooden pillars. It is situated on the northern end of Idgah.

The Nursing Home: Now under Government management is on the Gupkar road, about a couple of furlongs from Durganag.

Amarsingh Club: Situated at Munshibagh, has a cricket field and tennis courts in its precincts. Temporary membership is available.

All Saints Church: is situated in Munshibagh.

Durganag: It is a spring at the foot of the Shankaracharya sacred to Hindus. It has Dharamshalas where Sadhus and pilgrims to Amar Nath stay.

Srinagar Club: is on the Bund just above the Government Emporium. Temporary membership available.

The Head Post Office: is situated on the Bund about a furlong below the Kashmir Emporium.

Golf Course: An extensive ground just above the Nedou's Hotel. Temporary membership available.

Roman Catholic Church! is just below the Nedou's Hotel on the Badshah Road.

Government Arts Emporium: It is situated just half a furlong outside the Tourist Reception Centre, and is housed in the former Residency. It has beautiful lawns and chinars and a large well maintained flower garden

around it. Many herons have their nests on these chinars. All sorts of manufactured products of Kashmiri handicrafts and arts are sold here.

Main Business Centre: The main business centre is Amirakadal (1st Bridge) area, besides the Bund and the civil lines. All sorts of commodities are available here in the shops that line the roads there. Besides, many hotels, restaurants, cafes, bus services for all places, cinema houses, tonga and taxi stands are located in this area.

Cinema Halls: There are seven Cinema Halls in Srinagar viz. the Regal and the Palladium on the Residency Road, the Broadway in the Cantonment area, the Naaz near Hazuribagh, the Neelam just below the New Secretariat, the Shiraz at Khanayar, the Khayam at Naupora and Firdous at Zadibal.

Colleges: Shri Pratap College, Government College for Women and Teachers' College are located on the right side of the Maulana Azad road, while Amar Singh College is on the other side of the river about four furlongs from the bridge. The Gandhi Memorial and Islamia Colleges are located, down in the main city.

Stadium: The sports stadium with a capacity for some 15,000 spectators is a couple of furlongs from the first bridge on the road to the aerodrome, which is nine kilometers further up.

The Dal Lake: This lovely lake lies in the east of Srinagar, at the foot of "Shridhara (Zebarvan) mountain, with Shankaracharya hill (Takhti-Sulaiman) in its south and the Hari Parbat on its west. The lake is six km by three km and is divided by causeways into four parts—Garibal, Lokutdal, Boddal and Nigin. The Lokutdal and the Boddal have an island each in the centre, which are ideal picnic spots on warm summer days. The Government has set up a club on the island in the Lokut-Dal

recently for the benefit of the tourists. The green mountains, shady trees, tall reeds, patches of clouds sailing across the sky and floating gardens reflect varied hues on the placid rippling waters of the Lake. The effect of colours changes as the seasons advance. All this lends it a charm of exquisite loveliness, which makes it, perhaps, the most beautiful spot in the world. It is no wonder that the Moghul Emperors endowed with a high aesthetic sense, selected its shores as ideal spots for their gardens. A cruise in a 'Shikara on its crystal clear waters will leave an indelible impression on one's memory for ever after.

Nagin: (The Jewel on the Ring). It is is the smallest but the most lovely part of the lake. Separated by a causeway and only a couple of furlongs distant from Hazratbal, its blue deep waters, encircled by a ring of green trees and their fresh foliage, present it as a sapphire in an emerald ring; hence its name. There is a boatclub which offers facilities for bathing, swimming and sailing. Glass Fibre sailing boats are now available here.

CHAPTER III

ONE DAY TRIPS FROM SRINAGAR

Special bus services are arranged by the Government Tourist Department for convenience of tourists for sight-seeing. These buses start from the Tourist Reception Centre in the morning and return to Srinagar in the evening. Local buses also run between various places from Amira Kadal.

Pahalgam and back via Avantipur, Anantnag, Mattan and Aishmuqam.

Pampore: It is 16 km from Srinagar on the National Highway. The Karewas above and beyond Pampur are the only places in Kashmir where saffron is raised. During the summer the land lies fallow, but in October, masses of deep purple flowers come out of the prepared bed. The flowers are then collected and saffron separated from them.

Avantipura: It is 19 km from Srinagar on the National Highway. (for the ruins of the ancient temples see p. 74).

Anantnag: It is a large town, 54 km from Srinagar. It has several springs. The largest spring is believed to be the abode of Ananta, the serpent on which Visnu rests. The town is the centre of Gabba-making industry.

Mattan: It is six km to the east of Anantnag and 61 km from Srinagar. The temple at the head of the spring is the famous Martanda Tirtha, where Visnu Surya has been worhsipped since early times under the form of Martanda. The Tirth has remained to the present day, one of the most celebrated places of pilgrimage in the valley and annually attracts crowds of pilgrims and visitors from all parts of India. The legend connects the spring with the story of

the production of the sun from the lifeless egg (Martanda), which Aditi, the wife of Kashyapa, had brought forth as her thirteenth child. So the place is sacred to Surya (the Sun).

Martanda temple: The ruins of this famous ancient temple lie about a couple of km from Mattan, on the Karewa. It is to the south-east of this place. (see temples page 75).

Bumazuv: About a kilometer from Mattan on the road to Pahalgam is a temple, known in ancient times as Bhimkesava, erected by Bhima Shahi, during the time of Khsemagupta (950-58 A.D.). It is now converted into a Mohammadan 'Ziarat' and covered inside and outside with a thick coat of mud plaster. It is supposed to be the resting place of Baba Bamudin and is a place of pilgrimage for Muslims. Local tradition records that the saint, before his coversion, was a Hindu ascetic. Close to this temple there is a small cave in a cliff, containing a well preserved stone temple. There is another small cella closeby which also has been converted into a tomb.

Aishmuqam Ziarat: This is built in memory of Baba Ziaudin, one of the four disciples of the well-known Muslim saint Sheikh Noor-u-Din, properly known as Nunda Rishi. It is perched on the scarp of a hill 500 ft above the Pahalgam road. The mosque is noteworthy for its beautiful latticework (Pinjaras) and decorated panels.

Pahalgam: 7000 ft above sea level is 96 km from Srinagar. Originally a small village of shepherds, it has grown into a large hill station in Kashmir. Ideally situated at the junction of the Lidr and the Sesnag streams and placed in the bosom of thick pine and fir covered mountains, this small charming valley is very attractive and one of the most popular resorts of tourists from all over India. It is also a base for pilgrimage to the sacred cave of Amar Nath and for trekking over the beautiful

woodlands and alpine meadows of its side valleys. (for which see page 82). There are good hotels and restaurants, which provide board and lodging for all classes of people. The Government has built small huts, which are rented out. Besides, there are rest camps and youth hostels. But a number of people live in tents, which are available together with furniture of all sorts on fixed rates in the market. The best tent sites are on a wooded plateau, known as Rajavas, commanding a good view of the small valley. Ponies (riding and pack) are also available. A tourist officer is located in Pahalgam, from whom help and advice may be sought by tourists and to whom complaints may also be made. There is a club which is open for temporary membership where cultural programmes are arranged and where evenings can be spent pleasantly in other social activities.

While camping at Pahalgam, short trips to some of the following places may be profitably undertaken.

Mamlesvara: There is a small ancient stone temple. on the right bank of the streams opposite the club. The temple is consecrated to Siva Mamesvara and has been built before the 12th Century A.D., as king Jayasima (1128 to 49 A.D.) is said to have presented a golden ornament to it. It has a cella 7'-9' square inside, with a porch resting on columns. In front of the temple is a stone lined tank about 12 ft square.

Bhai Saran: It is a small grassy glen in the midst of pine and fir forest commanding a charming view of the valley. It is about 500 ft above on the mountain side and a couple of kilometers from the Bazar. One can go there on a pony.

Tulin Lake: This ice-bound lake is enclosed on three sides by snow-clad, steep, overhanging and grand mountain peaks, which rise precipitously about a thousand feet from

its shore. It is at an altitude of about 12000 ft. and can be approached on ponies upto the narrow snow field at the foot of it and about a furlong from the lake. The climb can be done in three to four hours. A few years ago a cloud burst littered the approach to the lake with rock and boulders.

Aru: Altitude 9000 ft., is 13 km from Pahalgam. It is an open meadow on the left side of the Lidr stream. Along which the road goes to it through forest and small valleys. It is a one day trip to Aru from Pahalgam and back.

Chandanwari: 15 km from Pahalgam, is a small shut-up valley at the junction of the streams from Sesnag and Astanmarg. The road, after crossing the bridge at Pahalgam village, goes along the right bank of the stream from Sesnag, which roars down in torrents and cascades through enchanting wild scenery. Its altitude is 9500 ft. Snow bridges over the stream are chief objects of attraction for the visitors. For longer treks from Pahalgam see page 82

One day trip from Srinagar can also be taken to **Achhabal, Kukarnag and Verinag.**

Achhabal: Sanskrit Aksipalanaga so called after king Aksa, is 64 km from Srinagar. The present garden was laid out by Jehan Ara, the daughter of Shah Jehan. It was known as Begumabad. It is 467' X 450' and divided into two parts. The copious springs issue from several places from the deodar covered spur of the hill behind it and their waters flow through the garden in stone-lined-canals. It is traversed by three aqueducts. There are two large tanks. The upper one has a pavilion in its centre. There are three waterfalls. The tanks abound in fish There is a trout hatchery close by.

Kukarnag: This copious sweet water spring is 24 km from Anantnag and 79 km from Srinagar. Abul Fazal has recorded that its water is said to have appetising

properties and helps digestion. The spring gushes out from under the foot of a thickly wooded hill. There is a tourist hut built in the middle of fine green lawns.

Verinag: About 80 km to the south-east of Srinagar, is considered to be the legendary source of Vitasta. The legend records that after the desiccation of Kashmir by gods, Siva prevailed upon his consort Parvati to show herself in the form of a river. He made an opening in the earth with the thrust of his trident. The thrust through which the water gushed out measured one Vitasta (span)—hence the name Vitasta. It was also known as Sulaghta (spear thrust) and Nila Kunda.

The emperor Jehangir, whose artistic taste for polishing the beauty of nature is well known, got the octagonal tank of sculptured stone built around it, which was completed in 1620 A.D. Shah Jehan laid out the garden and built cascades and aqueducts in front of it. The garden has now been renovated and the Government has built a rest house there. Tourists can visit it while on their way to Srinagar from Jammu.

One Day Trip to Gulmarg

Gulmarg: 8500 ft. an undulating lovely meadow 51 km west of Srinagar can be approached by bus. The small valley is three km in length and in places about a kilometer in width and is somewhat crescent shaped. On either side there are rolling hillocks, with the inner lofty range of the Pir Pantsal behind it. The upper slopes are thickly covered with tall pines and firs etc. while there are masses of moon daisies and other wild flowers on their lower slopes. It has one of the best natural golf courses in the world. On the eastern end of the valley there is a bazar, hotels and restaurants, post and telegraph office and other offices, while the Nedou's Hotel and Highland Park

Hotel are on the western side. Gulmarg club building is in the centre of the valley. Besides, there are well furnished huts (Government and private) which can be taken on rent for a longer sojourn. The circular road runs along the outer hills on the eastern side from where one can have a fine view of the Kashmir Valley and the grand, snow-clad Haramukh massif. Also one can have a magnificent view of the fifth highest mountain in the world, Nangaparbat—some 140 km towards the north. One can also pay a visit to High Altitude Cosmic Rays Research Laboratory located here.

Gulmarg is being developed as a Centre of Winter sports. A 2000-metre long aerial Rope-way (of which 500 metres are functioning is being constructed to lift skiers and others from Gulmarg to Khilanmarg. A 180-metre ski-lift in the form of ropetow has been installed on the training slope. Training facilities of international standards are made available.

Moreover, I.T.D.C. is building a centrally heated 50-room hotel here for the comfort of the tourists.

Khilanmarg: Four km from Gulmarg. This flowery meadow lies at the foot of Apharwat mountain. Here large herds of sheep may be seen grazing. Tabogganing (sliding on the snow) can be done on the snow covered Nullahs. There are a few restaurants here.

For trips to other places from Gulmarg see p. 103

Trip round the Vular Lake: This great fresh water lake, the largest in India, is a very important feature in the hydrographic system of Kashmir. It acts as a flood reservoir. Its dimensions vary at different times of the year. Normally it is 19 km by 10 km and is spread over an area of about 125 Sq km. Of course it gets silted up each year. Navigation on the lake often gets dangerous when sudden violent storms sweep over it from the mountains around it.

The name Vular seems to have been derived from Sanskrit Ullola, meaning turbulant or the lake with high going waves.

The legend goes that the wicked Naga king Sadangula who originally occupied it, was banished and a town Chandrapura sprang in its place. Subsequently the Naga Maha Padama was allowed by Nila the lord of Kashmir Nagas to occupy it. So Maha Padama appeared before the king Visvagasu as a disguised Brahmin and asked to be permitted to live in the town. When the request was granted he showed himself in his true form and sought permission to submerge the area. The king and the people had to migrate and Maha Padama after whom the lake was called in ancient times occupied the area.

Kalhana records another legend about Vular. It is said that when a Dravidian sorcerer threatened to desiccate the lake, Maha Padama appeared to the king Jayapida in a dream and asked him for protection. In return he promised to show him a mine of gold, Jayapida agreed to his request, but also allowed the sorceror to show his powers as well. When the lake began to dry and the family of the Naga began to riggle in the mud, the king caused the lake to be restored. But the Naga felt insulted and showed the king only a copper mine.

There is an island in the north-eastern part of the lake, said to have been made by Zainulabiddin, but there are ruins of an ancient temple on it, which must have been built much earlier. The Island must have been in the centre of the lake, when it was made. The lake now is very much shrunk.

Trip Round the Vular Lake

The tourist bus starts from the Tourists Reception Centre, Srinagar, in the morning. After passing by the

Anchar Lake, it crosses the Sindh Stream at Dodarhom, where there is a cool camping site under magnificient chinars on the bank of the stream. It stops at Tulamallya 23 km from Srinagar. There is a spring here sacred to goddess Ragnya (Khir Bhawani), the water of which is said to change its colour miraculously, a phenomenon attributed to the manifestation of the goddess. It is also said that Hanuman brought the goddess away from Lanka (Ceylon) to deprive the demon king Ravana of her protection. Thousands of pilgrims from all parts of Kashmir gather here on festival days, to worship the goddess.

The next stop is at Safapur, where one can have a splendid view of a small lake of crystal clear water, known as Mansbal, from Sanskrit Manassasrovaras or Mansrover. On its eastern bank stands Baladar mountain, the rugged features of which present an effective contrast to the gentle beauty of the lake. On its northern bank are the ruins of Darogabagh.

Next, the bus passes through Bandipur (56 km from Srinagar), a small town at the foot of Tragbal mountain on the bank of Madamati stream. From here the road leads up the mountain to the top of the Rajadanangan Pass, which leads into the beautiful small valley of Gurais through which the rapid flowing Kishanganga river rushes down to join the Jehlam at Mazzafarabad.

The bus then stops at Watalab for lunch. There is a Government Rest House here. The mosque of Baba Shukur-u-din stands on the top of the hill, which commands the superb view of the Vular Lake and the Haramukh Range in the distance. Next the bus passes through the small town of Sopur, on the bank of the river Jehlum. Lastly, the bus before ending the trip at Srinagar passes through Pattan. Here the tourists may visit the ruins of the ancient temple of Shankara Varmana, a warrior king

of Kashmir.

Sonamarg: Another one day trip from Srinagar can be profitably made to Sonamarg, a summer resort 80 km away in the north, and presenting a diversified scenery, ranging from narrow upland valleys and deep rock-girt gorges to open grassy meadow-lands and small villages here and there. It is on the chief trade route to Ladakh and Central Asia. The bus crosses the Sindh stream at Voyil 27 km from Srinagar, and proceeds along its banks, passing through several villages at the foot of the wooded mountains. It leaves the open valley behind at Gagnagir, then enters the gorge, where lofty overhanging mountains on either side of the stream, rise more than 8000 ft. almost sheer, from the turbulant and boisterous stream. Then again the valley opens and after rather a steep rise, the bus drives into the beautiful open small meadow of the golden flowers—Sonamarg. Besides Post and Telegraph Office there are a few small hotels and restaurants. There is a rest house also.

Thajiwas: A small beautiful side valley at the foot of the Sonamarg glacier, is just a kilometer and a half to the south of Sonamarg. A tourist hut stands there on the bank of the glacier stream and all around it are fine camping sites. Tourists desirous of climbing up to the steep slope leading to the glacier, should beware of falling pieces of rock. Walking on the glacier is dangerous for those who have no knowledge of mountaineering. The green Shakhdar hill to the north east of Thajawas has a bridle path part of the way up and is quite easy and safe for a view of the glacier.

Baltal: 9000 ft. at the foot of the Zojila pass and 15 km to the north of Sonamarg is a charming small valley. The road leading to it rises gradually from 7000 to 9000 ft. From Baltal Amar Nath Cave can be visited in a day. But

the route is full of risks, as one has to cross and recross the snow bridges on the Sindh stream, which become treacherously dangerous as the summer advances. A jeepable road has now been built right upto the sacred cave.

Yusmarg: It is a small open valley in the foot hills of the Pir Pantsal range, 40 km away to the south of Srinagar. Giant pines and firs thickly cover the mountain slopes on either side. Paritherum is being cultivated on the slopes lower down. A tourist hut stands in the middle of the valley. Ponies are available for trips to nearby places. A short trip to the white foamy and turbulant Doodganga (the milk stream) and lunching on its banks will be most entertaining. Another trip to Nilanag on the other side of the hill to the north may also be taken. There is a forest rest house available. The lake has warm water, but its banks are precipitous. For trips elsewhere see p.

Chrari-Sharif: 30 km from Srinagar and on the road to Yusmarg is the 'Ziarat' of the famous patron saint of Kashmir, Sheikh Noor-ud-Din, popularly known as Nunda Rishi. It is a large oblong building with a wing at either end. The plinth is of brick masonry and the upper structure is of hewn logs placed traversely, log on log. The roof rises in tiers and is supported on four pillars. Five hundred years ago, this saint organised a Muslim order of Rishis to supervise social development on the principle "that peace between neighbours and people begins with peace within individuals, combining the delights of solitude with manual labour for the community"—He is venerated by both Hindus and Muslims alike.

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CHAPTER IV

ANCIENT TEMPLES OF KASHMIR

"Ancient India has nothing more worthy of its early civilization than the grand remains in Kashmir, which now excite the wonder of interested tourists. The massive, the grotesque, the elegant in architecture may be admired in many parts of India, but nowhere is there to be seen the counterpart of the classically graceful, yet symmetrically massive edifices of Kashmir which though inferior to Palmyara or Persepolis in stateliness are, in beauty of position, so immensely superior to either."

"The immense indecipherable ruins which abound throughout the valley, and the immense quantity of cut and fluted stone, built or rather patched into walls of mosques. houses and into ghats and embankments, give evidence of how many have been lost of the series of temples erected by various rulers of Kashmir, between the second and the tenth centuries A.D."

Kalhana mentions numerous religious edifices, such as temples and viharas, erected by various kings, most of which have vanished due to ravages of time and other causes, but fortunately some of them still stand to this day in more or less well-preserved condition and from them we can form an idea of the skill and artisanship of sculptors and builders in stone of ancient Kashmir. Here are some of them.

Shankaracharya Temple: "This prominent hill feature, one thousand feet high is also known as Takhti-Sulaiman. Most of the authorities seem to agree that the first religious edifice on this commanding site was built by Jaluka, the son of **Ashoka,** in about 200 B.C. But Percy Brown assigns

a much later date to it, that is Seventh Century A.D. The temple was subsequently built and dedicated to Jyestesvara by Raja Gopaditiya (253-328 A.D.). The low enclosing wall and the plinth of the existing temple is what has remained of the old temple. Close by there are some ruins which indicate the existence of another ediffice of the same material.

The present upper structure of the temple, the interior of which is 14' in diameter, is supposed to have been built by some unknown Hindu devotee, during the tolerant reign of Jehangir. The roof is supported by four octagonal limestone pillars. Upon the back pillars on the left, there are two inscriptions in Persian, one of which states that the idol was made by Haji Hashti, a Sangkar (sculptor) while the other states that it was raised by Khawja Rukm, the son of Mirjan. The rest of the inscription is below the pavement. These inscriptions have been removed.

There is a tradition among the local Brahmins that the temple was built by Raja Sandimat, a saintly hero of a legend. The Muhammadan appellation of Sulaiman may be an adaptation of this name.

A climb to the top of this hill early in the morning will be most rewaıding, as one can have a magnificent view of the valley and the snowy peaks of the Pir Pantsal beyond, bathed in the pink of morning glory, when the first rays of the rising sun make their impact on them. On the other side one sees Zabarvan dressed in sombre hues being reflected in the rippling water of the Dal lake.

Awantipur: is 30 km from Srinagar on the National Highway. Here at the foot of the mountain on the left side of the road stand the ruins of a temple built by Avantivarmana (855-83 A.D.). He dedicated this temple to Visnu. Though not equal in size to the Martanda temple of Lalitaditya, this ranks among the most imposing monuments of

ancient Kashmir architecture. Half a mile away towards Srinagar there is another temple built by the same king, but dedicated to Siva.

Martanda Temple: This was built by Lalitaditya Mukhtapida (699-736 A.D.) a famous warrior king of Kashmir. But on the authority of verses in Rajatarangini, the interpretation of which is very much disputed, its erection is attributed to Ranaditya (fifth century) and the side chapels to his queen—Amritaprabha. The colonnade is distinctly recorded as the work of Lalitaditya. Jonaraja ascribes the destruction of the temple to Sultan Sikandar, the iconoclast. According to Shri J.L. Bhan, Curator S.P.S. Museum Srinagar, the temple was dedicated to Siva. The four figures represent Lokesvara, Barov, Nataraja and Trimurti with a female figure in swimming attire, symbolically representing Ganga.

The temple is situated on a 'Karewa' about three kilometers from the Martanda Tirtha in the village of Mattan on the road to Pahalgam. In the words of Younghusband, "the temple is built on the most sublime site, occupied by any building in the world—finer than the site of Parthenon or of the Taj, or of the St. Peters or of the Escurial—we might take it as the representative or rather the culmination of all the rest and by it we must judge Kashmir people at their best". "On a perfectly open and even plain," continues Younghusband, "gently sloping away from a background of snowy mountains, looking directly out on the entire length, both of the smiling Kashmir Valley and of the snowy ranges which bound it—so situated, in fact as to be encricled, and yet not overwhelmed by the snowy mountains—stand the ruins of a temple, second only to Egyptians in massiveness and strength and to the Greeks in elegance and grace. It is built of immense rectilinear blocks of limestone, betraying strength and durability,

Its outline and its details are bold, simple and impressive. Any overweighing sense of massiveness is relieved by the elegance of surrounding columnade of graceful Greek-like pillars. It is but a ruin now, but yet, with the other ruins, so numerous in the valley and similar in their main characteristics, it denotes the former presence in Kashmir of a people worthy of study. No one without an eye for natural beauty would have chosen that special site for the construction of a temple and no one with an inclination to the ephemeral and transient would have built it on so massive and enduring a scale."

"The ruins (220′ × 142′) consist of a lofty central edifice, which are calculated to have been not less than 75 ft. with a small detached shrine on either side of the entrance, and of a quadrangular courtyard of imposing dimensions surrounded by colonnades of 84 columns, being the multiple of number of days in a week with the number of signs in the Zodiac. Water was brought to it by a canal from the Lidr. Even in their decay they command admiration both by their massiveness and by the beauty of their architectural design and decoration."

Narasthan: The ruins of this temple lie in the east at the head of the Tral valley, about 50 km from Srinagar. Its situation is very picturesque, looking down the narrow valley while behind it slope upwards the grand and lofty mountain ranges. About this temple Percy Brown says: "The pediment and arch motif appears in a further process of development.....the flat offsets have been elaborated into moulded niches with traingular canopies and sunk trefoil arch introduced. Around the shrine is also thrown an enclosure wall forming a courtyard entered by a prominent gateway. Here the style is seen approaching its final form.

Payer: Lies about 32 km south of Srinagar under the



Shankaracharya Temple on the top of the hill

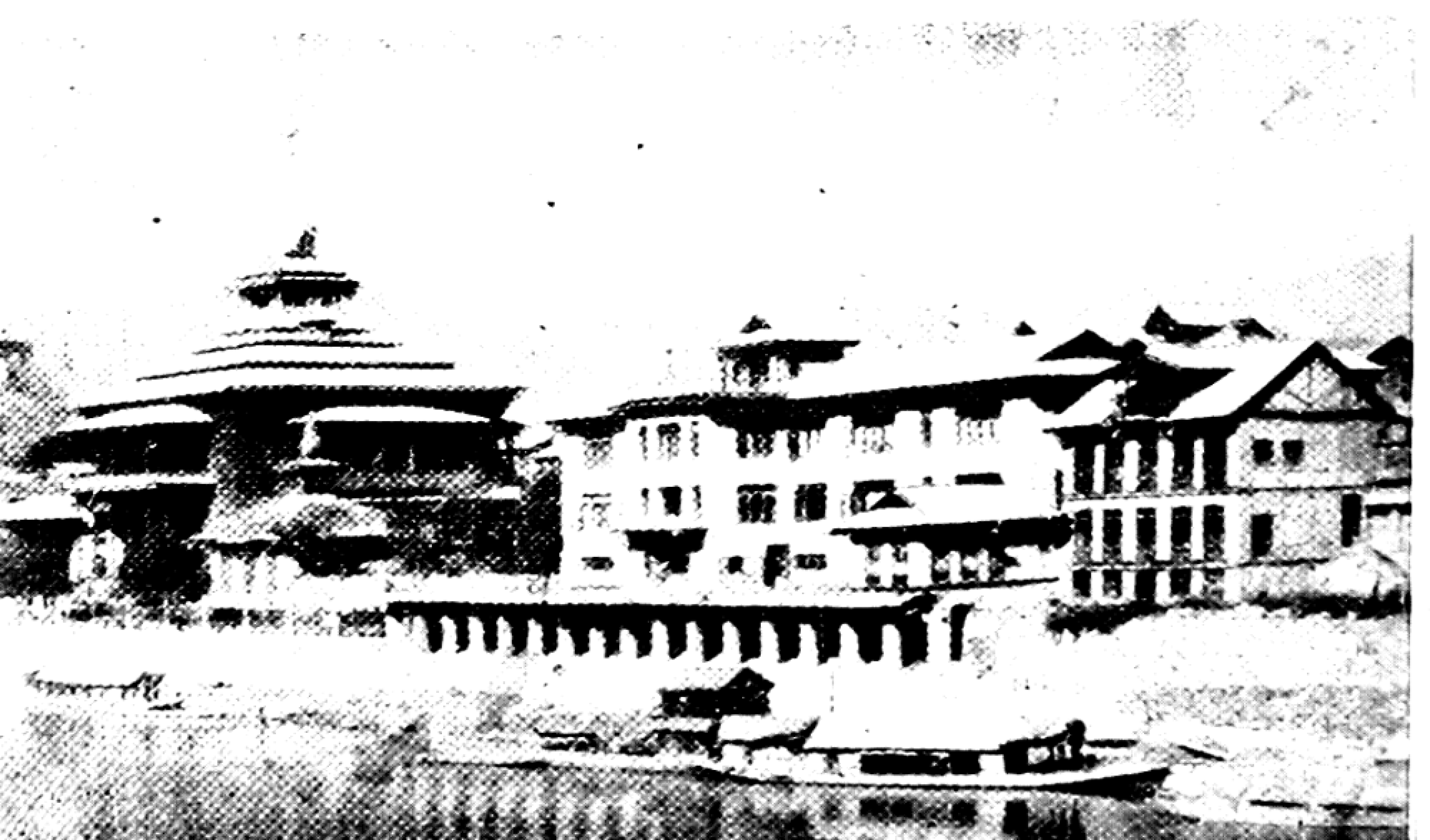
Ruins of Ancient Temple at Narannag





Imposing Ruins of the Martand Temple

ahi Hamadan Mosque, Hari Parbat Fort in the Background



'Nownagri Karewa' (Nowgam Uddar), a few kilometers from Pulwama on the road to Shupian. The ancient temple is situated on the south side of the village near the bank of the stream, surrounded by a few walnut and willow trees. "In its intrinsic beauty and elegance of outline, it is superior to all the existing remains in Kashmir of similar dimensions. Its excellent preservation may probably be due to its retired position at the foot of the 'Karewa and by the marvellous solidity of its construction. The cella which is only 8 ft. square and has an open doorway on each of the four sides, is composed of only ten stones, the four corners being a single stone each, the sculptured tympanums over the doorways of the four others while two more compose the pyramidal roof—the lower of these being an enormous mass 8 ft.square by 4 ft. in height. It has been ascribed to Raja Narindraditya (9th century). The sculptures over the doorways apparently, are Brahma, Visnu, Siva and goddess Durga. But in the opinion of Shri J.L. Bhan, the Curator of S.P.S. Museum Srinagar, the four figures represent Siva in His different aspects, viz. Lokesvara, Barov, Nataraja and Trimurti. The bull carved on the smaller pilasters of the doorway also show that it was dedicated to Siva."

Kother: It is about five km from Achhabal garden. The tank and the ruins of the temple still exist here. They are said to have been built by a Raja from the south (Deccan) who had developed horns on his head and which he dropped here after bathing in the tank.

Narannag: The ruins of the temple at Narannag are situated at the head of the Wangat Valley and at the foot of Butsher (Butesvara) mountain, on the way to the sacred lake of Gangabal. It is 10 km to the north of Kangan a village 46 km from Srinagar, on the road to Sonamarg. The first of the temples in the group, now in a dilapidated condition and with weeds and grass all round, is said to have

been built by Jaluka, the son of Ashoka. More temples were built and also despoiled and plundered by later kings. The ancient Tirtha of Sodara is the nearby spring now called Narannag about two km to the north of Wangat village, where Rishi Vaisishta is said to have had his Ahsram. King Sandimat, according to the Rajatarangini, resorted to this place after his renunciation. Kalhana compiled the Rajatarangini at this Tirtha.

About these ruins Percy Brown says: "Three groups of buildings are discernible within a short distance of each other, the production of the whole probably extending over a considerable period and to have begun at a relatively early date, one structure having been identified as Jyeshthesa temple of Lalitaditya (eighth century). Two of the groups consist of temples and shrines of the typical Kashmir order, while the third was a large and substantial building of which only the plinth remains.

The southern group comprises, a central temple around which cluster several shrines......surfaces are simpler and less ornate than in the valley itself. The other range of temples towards the north of the site is contained within a walled enclosure with a fine revetment wall on the mountain side... (There is) the presence, in a prominent position of an immense cistern, eighteen feet long with its other dimensions in proportion, cut out of one huge boulder, a work of astonishingly patient skill and stupendous labour

But the most original achievement at Wangat is the solid masonry plinth standing separate from the temple and evidently the remains of a building of a special type, measuring about one hundred and twenty feet long by seventyfive feet wide with a height of ten feet and approached by a stairway on its southern face, along its sides are over thrity monolithic bases or piers at regular intervals of some twelve feet. Enough therefore remains of this structure to indicate that

it was a pillard pavilion of imposing dimensions and appearance "

For Bumazua, and Mamalesvara see p 48 & 65

Meru Vardhana: It is a well preserved stone temple six km from Srinagar on the left side of the National Highway at the southern end of the cantonment area. It was built by the minister Meruvardhana in the 10th Century A.D. and dedicated to Siva. About this Percy Brown also says: "The building only 17 ft. square externally and 25 ft. in height is a perfect type of the later development and displays several interesting features. In this example it will be noticed that the horizontal moulding cutting across the upper angle of the high pitched pediment is omitted, and this member really appears again. The ceiling is also unusually attractive, as it consists of diagonally placed beams, with brackets, like dentils, supporting its outer framework, all very wooden in treatment, but on the other hand the general principles applied in this design are much the same as those in the coffered ceilings of many Hindu temples."

Buniar: About 64 km down on the Srinagar-Uri road is an ancient temple in a well preserved condition at Buniar. Its cella is of large dimensions 13 sq. ft. (interior) Its walls are supported on a basement 4 ft. sq. It retains a cloistered quadrangle measuring 145′ X 120′.

Ludov: What is probably one of the oldest examples is the Rudresa temple at Ludov, situated sixteen miles south-east of Srinagar, a plain and simple square walled structure having every appearance of a primitive type. Its early character receives confirmation from the fact that it resembles in several respects one of the buildings of Gandhara, the Vihara of Guniyar in the Swat valley of the Frontier Province (Now in Pakistan) which is hardly likely to be later than the fifth century A.D. although the Ludov temple may have been built at least two centuries after that date. ●

CHAPTER V

TREKS

Mahadeo: Mount Mahadadeo is to the east of Srinagar behind Harvan reservoir. It is 13000 ft. above sea level. This is regarded by the Hindus as sacred to god Siva, after whom it is named. Being quite near Srinagar and not so difficult, it can afford good training for University students and other beginners, interested in mountaineering, who visit Kashmir in summer each year. The climb can be done in three days quite easily. For a party, arrangements for carrying luggage etc. should be made in advance, by contacting ponymen or porters at Bren village about five km to the east of Shalamar. Starting early on the first day the party may camp at Lidwas, a small closed valley at the head of the stream running down from it. The path along the stream crosses and recrosses it several times. There are one or two steep bits, especially one between Bobjan and Lidwas. On the second day, they can go to the summit of the mountain and come back to the camp for lunch. Then, if in a hurry to save a day they can come down to Harvan or Shalamar, from where they can safely be back in Srinagar by a pre-arranged bus. The other alternative is to stay at Lidwas for the day and come down on the third day and catch a bus for Srinagar from Harvan. The first part of the climb from Lidwas is over a snow field, if undertaken in early summer, and thereafter over rocks to the top. A strong experienced climber can do the trip in a single day from Srinagar. The writer has done so once by starting from Srinagar at 4 o'clock in the morning on a bicycle returning to Srinagar by 7 o'clock in the evening. For

the day the cycle was left at the foot of the mountain.

Dara to Hain: A short trek can also be had from Lower Dara, a Gujar hamlet at the foot of Mahadev and five km to the north of Water Reservoir at Harvan. The path zigzags up the Hain mountain to the top of the ridge and then descends through the forest to Hain village on the other side. There is a forest hut a kilometer above the village. One can return to Srinagar on the same day in the evening by catching a bus on th Srinagar-Sonamarg road or one can stay the night in the hut and come back to Srinagar on the following day.

Treks from Pahalgam: It is ideally situated for a base, from where many treks, both short and long can be undertaken. Here are some of them:

(I) Trek to the holy cave of *Amarnath*—The cave believed to be the abode of Lord Siva, is at an altitude of 13000 ft. The object of worship here is a Lingam, formed by water dripping through the limestone roof of the cave. Many Hindus from all over the country visit the sacred cave during summer singly or in small parties. Such trips take between three to four days or more from Pahalgam according to the time at their disposal. But several thousand pilgrims gather at Pahalgam in August each year to start for the cave, to have the Darshan of this Lingam on the full moon day of Sawan (July-August).

The State Government makes eleborate arrangements for transport of the pilgrims assemblied here. Pack and riding ponies, porters, 'dandies' and other requirements are made available for the journey. A Senior Officer is appointed as Camp Officer under whom police and medical services and others work, to look after the pilgrims. The Dharmartha Department looks after the feeding and shelter of the Sadhus of whom there is generally quite a large number. Besides, fuel, provisions etc. are stored at different stages

on the route. Tents and other necessary equipment can be rented from shops at Pahalgam on fixed rates. In fact all necessary arrangements are made by the State Government so that the pilgrims feel no inconvenience and discomfort.

The pilgrims start on the 12th day of the bright half of Sawan (August) from Pahalgam and camp at Chandanwari 9000 ft. see p. 66 for the night, on the first day of the pilgrimage.

Chandanwari to Wawajana: (11000 ft.) 13 km. There is a bridle path which winds up the Pisu hill, but a shorter footpath up the Nullah and then a steep climb through the forest takes the pilgrims up to the top of Pisu Ghati and then onwards along the mountain slope to Wawajan where they camp for the night. Just below the camp can be seen the blue waters of the Sesnag, with the glacier-covered mountain behind it, reflecting its varied colours. It is a grand sight.

In ancient times Sesnag was called Susarwasnag the abode of father-in-law. The upper portion of it is called Zamatarnag—the abode of the son-in-law. The legend says that a daughter of this Naga was married to a Brahmin boy at Bijbehara. The king of the place cast evil eyes on the beautiful Naga girl and tried to harass the couple in every possible way. Thereupon the father-in-law was furious and rolled down furiously on the city and destroyed it. Then he took away his daughter and the son-in-law and assigned a portion of the lake for their sojourn, designated as Zamatarnag.

Wawajan to Panchtarni: 13 km. Pilgrims follow the road leading up the long and serpentine Mahagunas (the great viper) to the top of this pass (altitude 14000 ft.). Then it winds down another six km to the beautiful plain meadow of Panchtarni on the right bank of the stream of the same name. Higher up one can have a fine view of

the glaciers from which the stream rises. Here the pilgrims camp on the third day.

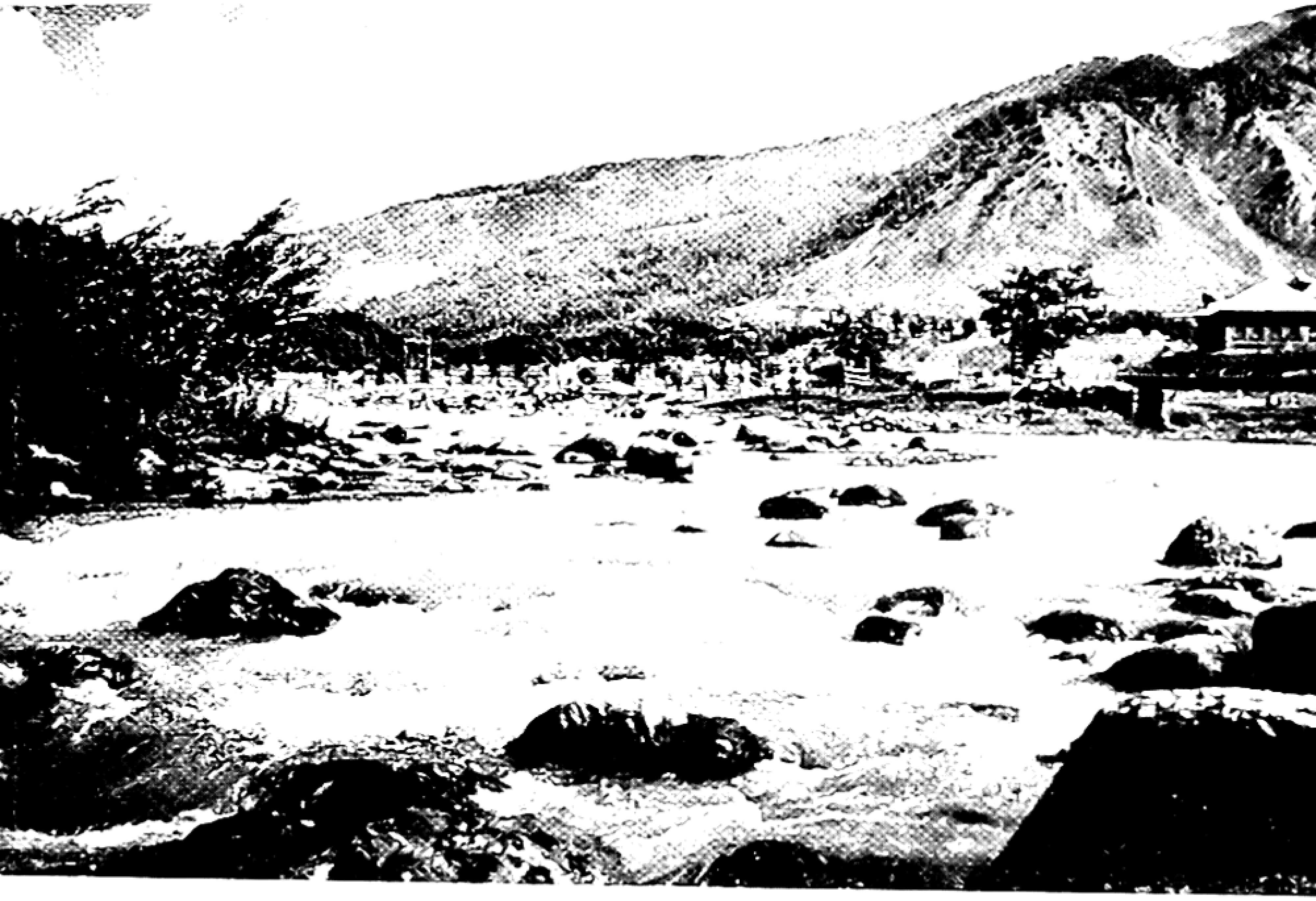
Panchtarni to the cave and return: On the fourth day, the pilgrims start very early in the morning for the Darshan of the Lingam at the cave, six km, away. Reaching its foot they bathe in a tiny brook Amaravati and then rub themselves with 'baboot' (limestone dust) and climb up to the cave, wherefrom, after darshan they return to Panchtarni for lunch. Then they start on their way back to Wawajan or further four miles down to Zojipal, a small camping site, protected from the cold winds, blowing at Wawajan, and camp here at the end of the fourth day.

On the fifth day they are back at Pahalgam and some of them catch a bus for Srinagar and are there in the evening.

II. Short Trip to Amar Nath Cave. The cave can also be visited singly or in parties from June to the end of September. The trip can be done in three to four days or more according to the time at one's disposal. One can easily go to Zojipal, a sheltered, small meadow and camp there for the night or one can go further on to Wawajan and camp at a spot overlooking the charming Sesnag lake 26 km from Pahalgam. On the second day, leaving the camp standing, one can go to the cave, have darshan and return to Wawajan or Zojipal camp, 26 km each way. On the third day, return to Pahalgam. This can be done on ponies.

III. Pahalgam to Kolahoi Glacier: 3 days. On the first day one can easily go to Lidrwat, 10 km to the north of Aru see p. From Aru the path goes through thick forests and glens along the left bank of Lidr. Then one crosses the stream over a bridge to the right bank and can stay at the tourist hut at Lidrwat.

Kolahoi Glacier: 13 km from Lidrwat. The path runs along the right bank through pine forests, then through



Pahalgam Valley

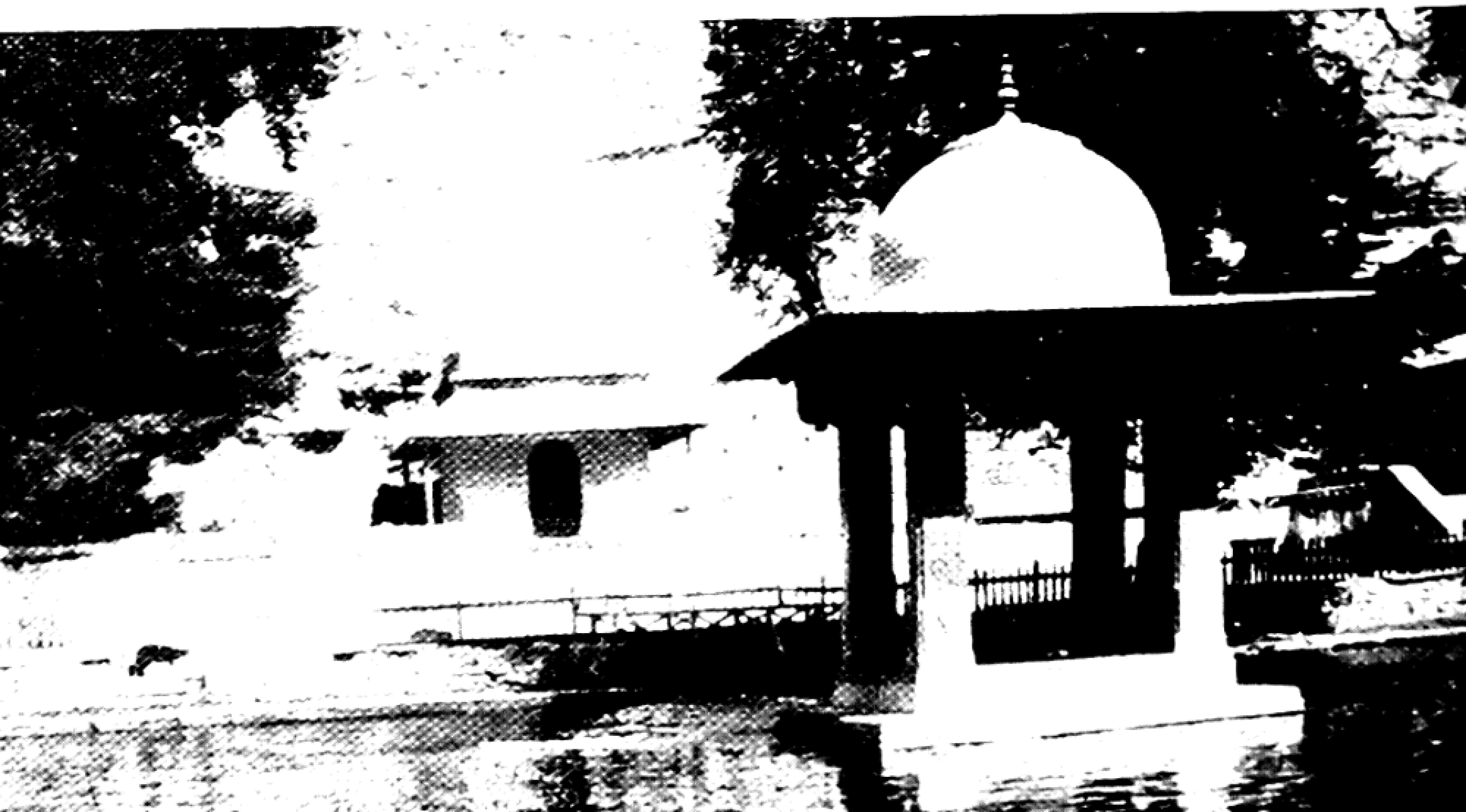
Mt. Kolahoi 17,799 ft.





Sacred Lingam in Amarnath Cave

Spring and Temple at Mattan



birches. After going about six km, the path turns to east and crosses over a log bridge. One goes through meadows, carpetted with wild flowers. Several other shallow, small streams have to be forded. At the head of the valley a waterfall gushes out of the snout of the glacier. This is the source of the Lidr. (altitude 11, 200 ft.).

To climb up to the glacier, a difficult terrace has to be negotiated. Further up, it opens out and the great sea of ice can be seen at the foot of the great rock peak of Kolahoi. One returns to Lidrwat tourist hut for the night—distance 19-22 km. On the third day one returns to Pahalgam or one can take another trip to the beautiful mountain lake Tarsar, 16 km to the west of it. The path goes along the stream coming from Tarsar. A shorter route is to cross the stream three km from Lidwat near the Gujar huts and then follow the right bank till one comes to the rising ground below Tarsar. One goes up the gentle slope, and has the breath-taking view of this charming small ice-cold water lake, with a snow capped ridge at the back of it. In early summer one can see icefloes floating on it. Just across this ridge to the north lies the Marsar. This lake feeds the water Reservoir at Harvan. This is a prohibited area. Then one returns to Lidrwat for the night and to Pahalgam on the following day.

Longer Treks From Pahalgam

Climb to mount Kolahoi: (altitude 17.893 ft.) All arrangements for the expedition should be made at Pahalgam.

Pahalgam to Armuin via Aru see p 66.

Aru to Armuin: 13 km. The path goes along the right bank of the stream through thick forests, for about six km. Then one crosses to the left bank over a log bridge and then through a narrow valley with precipitous, wooded moun-

tains on either side to Armuin which is a small sheltered valley. There are a few Gujar huts here. Eggs and milk may be got. There are birch bark trees. A good camping site. A shorter route over the hump behind the Pahalgam village can take the party direct to Armuin avoiding the longer route via Aru.

Armuin to Harnag: 16 km. A short climb over boulders in the beginning and then across the open grassy meadow of Nafaren (11,500 ft.) takes one to the foot of the Harbaghwan pass. At Nafaren there are shepherd huts and numerous sheep can be seen grazing in the valley and on the mountain slopes. Half way up to the pass, the path goes through a steep and narrow gorge, where the ponies have to be unloaded and led over the bouldered slope to the top. It is very hard going for ponies, which are very reluctant to move on and have rather to be forced. Then a gentle slope down to Harnag, a beautiful small lake between, steep mountains on either side. Path goes along the left side of the lake for another two miles to the northern end of the lake, where base camp may be established. Juniper wood is available and milk can be obtained from goatherds. Camp a couple of furlongs down the stream. Brown bear is found in the rocks higher up.

Harnag to High Camp at 16000 ft.: There are two routes leading up. For the first, one crosses the small stream coming down from the glacier and then keeps on climbing the grassy gentle slope of the mountain to the left till one comes to the goatherd camp on the top. Then one strikes across the snow field to the foot of the ice-wall, keeping close to snow slopes on the left. The second route takes one to the same ice-wall by starting to climb along the right bank of the stream till one comes to the snow field at the foot of the mountain on the left. Crossing it and scrambling up the steep rocky slope on the right till one comes to

the icewall. Steps may be cut into it. On the top of the wall there is an extensive snow field stretching across for about three km between the Buttress peak on the south and Mount Kolahoi in the west. Towards the north there can be seen a hillock. Camp at the sheltered foot of this hill on the snow. One may set up a small tent on a small ledge of this hillock. Only porters can come up to the high camp. To reach this one should be careful to avoid crevasses. It will be safar to move on a rope, if the crevasses are covered with shallow fresh snow. Tinned provisions should be carried. Snow has to be melted for water. At night, if clear, one feels almost above this terrestrial world, in the company of bright twinkling stars —a very exhilirating experience.

Make an early start the next day. Strike across the glacier keeping close to the Buttress Peak on your left till you reach the foot of the steep snow slope with a rock-island on the top. Climb to it. Change shoes for rope-soled one's for rock-climbing The writer has found grass shoes very comfortable and firm both on the rock and snow. You are now at the foot of the precipitous rocky giant peak of the Mount Kolahoi. Refresh yourself with some tea and snacks. Then begin the arduous scramble up the rockysteepslope. Beware of thefallingbits of rockwhich break away as the sun gets warmer. It is safer to climb up the northern slope till one comes to the serrated ridge top just below the snow clad summit. Once on the top, be careful not to go too near the edge of the snow cap. The mountain is a sheer 2000ft. drop on the north. The panorama from the peak is grand. All round there are mountain ranges many kilomerers in depth. The Nun Khun peaks 23000ft can be seen in the distance towards east, while the great Nanga Parbat may be seen towards the north. It is a magnificient sight. Follow the same

route down to the foot, being careful not to miss footholds. Once more on the snow, glissade down the snow slope and then across to the High Camp from where one may move down to the base camp to pass the night comfortably there, after having been on one's feet for about 14 hours.

Then back to Pahalgam the same way which can be done in a single day by going over the hump from Armuin or in two days by going via Aru.

Harnag to Amar Nath Cave via Rabimarg: cross the stream from Harnag opposite the camp on the left bank across the mountain range on the east. Loaded ponies have to be helped at one or two places. From the top of the Rabimarg, the path going down to the other side is good for ponies also. Down below in the valley it meets the path coming up from Chandanwari. Follow this path to Chandanwari five km down. Then to Amar Nath Cave by the main pilgrim route see p

One can take a shorter route to Amar Nath Cave from this point where the two paths meet, by following up the stream to the shut-up small valley of Astanmarg six km above this point. Camp here.

Next day. A very stiff climb to the top of the pass 14000 ft. and then along the mountain side via Hatyara Talav to the top of Mahagunas pass and then via pilgrim route see p. Only porters can go by this route. Formerly pilgrims used to return from the pilgrimage by this route but it has now been closed by the Government due to its being very dangerous in wet weather.

Harnag to Amar Nath Cave: 11 km. From Harnag follow down the stream till one comes to its junction with the stream from Panchtarni. Cross over snow bridge and then along right bank till one comes to the Amaravati stream from the cave. Then follow the stream to the cave. This route is accessible only in early summer when the

snow bridges are hard and therefore safe for crossing over.

Harnag to Baltal—at the foot of Zoji La Pass-13 km. Follow down the stream and then over the snow-bridges to Baltal. Crossing and recrossing the Panchtarni Stream several times. To be tried only in early summer. But a jeepable road now connects Amar Nath with Baltal.

From Harnag into Kolahoi valley over the glacier: one day. Must have some knowledge of mountaineering and use of the rope. Then from Kolahoi to Pahalgam.

Pahalgam into the Sindh Valley: From Pahalgam to Tarsar see p. 85. Camp at Sekiwas at the foot of the Yemher Pass.

Sekiwas to Zaivan: over Yember Pass 13500ft. 16 km. Sekiwas is three km from Tarsar, on the main route. From Sekiwas the path goes up gently to the top of the pass over a grassy slope and then a snow field. Then over a very narrow and dangerous path for about 50 yds. to the rocky slope on the other side. On the left is a deep gorge into which a loaded pony may fall on account of the slightest carelessness on the part of the ponymen. Then a long and tiresome climb down, first over rocks and then through birch bark forest to Zaivan. There is a forest rest house here, but there are no catering arragements.

Next day a steep descent to Kulan a village 61 km from from Srinagar on the Sonamarg Road. Then by bus to Sonamarg 10 km towards the north or back to Srinagar.

This trek can be done in the reverse direction (from Sonamarg to Pahalgam also.)

Sekiwas to Sindh Valley via Deo Masjid: The path takes a westerly direction then round the Deo Masjid hill comes to the top of the Nullah from Suraphrao. Then a a long exhausting descent through the forest to Suraphrao, a village in the Sindh valley 56 km from Srinagar on the Sonamarg road. Then by bus to Sonamarg or back to

Srinagar.

Tarsar to Srinagar via Tral Valley. Pahalgam to Tarsar see p. 85.

Tarsar to Nagberan: An easy descent of eight km over grassy pleasant slopes.

Nagabaran to Sotar: 19 km. First the path ascends to the top of the ridge and then a gradual descent of 4000ft. to Sotar, a pretty village at the foot. A visit to the ruins of the ancient temple of Narasthan (see temples) p 77, will be worthwhile.

Sotar to Srinagar via Tral and Khrew: From Sotar buses are available and also from Tral. At Tral and Khrew there are a number of springs. At Khrew there is a shrine sacred to goddess Jwala.

Pahalgam into Sindh Valley over Botkol Glacier: Though the trek is long it is very interesting, as one has to go through lovely forests, charming meadows, vast snow fields and grand glaciers and through wild but varied scenery.

Pahalgam to Zojipal: 10 km (pilgrim route to Amar Nath Cave.)

Zojipal to Purmandal-16 km. Cross the Sesnag stream at Zojipal. Then climb to the lovely mountain tarn of Sonasar 500 ft above Zojipal and towards the south. It is almost surrounded by snow covered mountains. Then along the foot of the mountain on the right, keeping close to the bank of the lake till one comes to the foot of the pass at the upper end, of the lake. Then climb the steep mountain side till one comes to the snows at the top of the pass 13,500 ft. Then descend on the other side through the forests for about four miles to the beautiful glen of Purmandal. Only porters can cross the pass.

Purmandal to Sukhnus: 6 km. Sukhnus is a small hamlet in the Wadvan valley. From here one can go down the Wadvan valley to Kishtwar or return to Kashmir via

(see p 92) Change porters here.

Dr. Neve mentions another route to Sukhnus. From Wawajan to Rangamarg in the Kundran valley and from there to Sukhnus. Ponies may be taken over this route.

Sukhnus to Wompet: 16 km. Route rough and slippery at places through birches. Grand scenery. Goat-herd camps at Wompet.

Wompet to Kanital: 20 km. Path goes along the left bank, ascending very gradually, slippery at places. The side streams have to be forded. Goat herd camp at Kanital.

Kanital to Donara: 16 km. 8 hours. Start early. While on the glacier be careful about the crevasses: Avoid them when open. Probe with an iceaxe or a staff when covered with soft fresh snow. Services of a guide useful, if one lacks mountaineering experience. To go on a rope will be safer. The route zigzags to avoid crevasses and becomes steeper as one gets close to the gali. Then keep close to the mountain slope on the left till one is on the top of the Botkol glacier pass 14000ft. From here, one can have a grand and awe-inspiring view of the vast Botkol glacier extending over miles and miles to the foot of the mighty Nunkun mountain, 23000 ft. Descent rather easy over the snow and then over shale and scree to Donara. Camp here. Goat-herd camps. A shorter, but rather difficult route from Wompet meets here.

Donara to Suru: 16 km. Follow the path on the left bank till one comes to a snow bridge over the turbulant stream, a mile short of Suru. Cross over the snow bridge if it is firm, otherwise follow down another mile and cross by the bridge over the stream. Suru is on the right bank. It is a small village.

Suru to Kargil: 50 km—Can easily be done in two days or in a single day on a pony according to convenience.

The road is quite good and goes along the left bank of the Suru river. At Sanku, 16 km from Suru, there is a rill of water flowing out of the mountain slope. It is light and and seems to possess some digestive mineral properties. It removes grease without the use of soap. The writer drank 32 cups of water without feeling the slighest heaviness in the stomach.

Kargil is the Tehsil Headquarter and is half way between Leh and Srinagar. Buses and other vehicles now run daily on this National Highway to Leh which is one day journey away from this place by bus.

Dr. Neve describes another route to Drass, a village on the National Highway and halfway between Kargil and Sonamarg.

Suru to Sanku: on the road to Kargil-see above.

Sanku to Umba: a bad road 3 hrs, fording a stream halfway.

Umba to Drass: 30 km, a double march over steep ascent 3500 ft to Umba La Pass (altitude 14800 ft). Then there is an easy descent to grassy valley, camping ground 3 to 5 km down. Then easy ascent to Lamagus La 14000 ft overlooking Drass Valley—a long gradual descent for 2 hrs. The total time would thus be ten hours. The path is difficult in early summer or after a snowfall. From Drass one can catch a bus to Leh or to Srinagar.

From Pahalgam to Kishtwar or back to Kashmir via Wadvan.

Pahalgam to Sukhnus—(see p 90)

Sukhnus to Inshin: 8 hours. Route several ups and downs mostly down hill.

Inshin to camp: 16 km—5 hrs. In places there are rocky ascents and descents along slopes of the mountains.

Camp to Gauran: 16 km—5 hrs. Slight ascent over boulders and marshy ground to the top of the Margan Pass

11,500 ft. Then steep descent. Then easier down valley to Gauran village.

Gauran to Shangas: 24 km—6 hrs. Road level and good. 11 km to Nawboog. Then ascent to Hockim gali. Then undulating path through forests to Shangas. Slippery in wet weather.

Shangas to Srinagar: by bus.

Inshin to Kishtwar: Inshin to Marau, a village 40 km down in the beautiful Wadvan valley. Then 3 stages to Kishtwar via Saiwa, Nauzil.

Routes to Kishtwar from Kashmir

Srinagar to Akingam: a large village five km in the east of Achhabal by bus.

Akingam to Wangam: 19 km. The interesting spring of Sundabrari may be visited from here.

Wangam to Karabudurum: 19 km. Through a very pretty alpine valley. Then up the Marbal glen through forests and grass lands to Karabudurum, a small 'marg' at 9200 ft. Gujar huts a short distance away.

Karabudurum camp to Singpur: 19 km. A steep ascent partly on snow to top 11550 ft. The steep descent through snow in the ravine. Fine scenery of rhododendrons. Then steady descent through forests by the stream to Singpur a large village —6900 ft.

Singpur to Moghul Maidan: 18 km. The descent is steep to Chatru. Then it meets Tsingam route and later Moghul Maidan eight km from Chatru.

Moghul Maidan to Kishtwar: 18 km. Four miles below this one meets the Wadvan river which can be crossed three km ahead. Then the path goes two km along the Chandrabhaga river which is crossed at a most picturesque gorge. There is a steep climb to the plateau on which Kishtwar is situated. A grand scenery meets the eye on

this route—lofty peaks of 21000 ft. are seen rising right from the deep gorges of Wadvan and Chenab rivers. In summer this part of the trek will be hot. From Kishtwar one can go by bus to Jammu or Srinagar.

Chief route from Kashmir to Kishtwar: The chief route beyond Acchabal is over the Simthan Pass. Srinagar to Achhabal by bus. Ponies may be hired at Achhabal or Kother. A road connecting Kishtwar with Kashmir is under construction.

Kother to Dooso: 19 km. A good road through open and pretty valley and among low hills to Dooso or Dyus 7400 ft. There is a forest rest house on the marg. Good camping ground at Rajparan and Dhaksun a bit higher up. Now vehicles can go up to Dhaksun.

Dooso to Simthan: By bridle path 22 km. By foot path 19 km. An ascent of 400 ft. to Kodan. Then to Harshan glen, then by Zigzag path to the Chingam Pass 12300 ft. It remains open in summer only upto November, The view from here is magnificient. Then descend into Simthan glen. There is a forest rest house here.

Simthan to Chatru: 21 km. Steady descent to Tsingam Pass to 11 km and then to Chatru.

Chatru to Kishtwar—see p 93. Kishtwar is a small town and headquarter of the district and situated on a plateau. It is now connected by a good, pakka road with both Srinagar and Jammu. Regular bus services ply.

Kishtwar to Bhadarwah: Bhadarwah is a small beautiful valley and is called Chhota Kashmir on account of similarity of its scenery and milder climate to Kashmir. A bus takes one to Doda, from where another bus goes to Bhadarwah town, which is the headquarter of the Tehsil. From here another trip on foot or on a pony to Kailash 19 km from it will be quite interesting. The route passes through forests and snowy mountains amidst grand scenery.

Chapter VI

TREKS INTO OR ACROSS THE PIR PANTSAL RANGE

The whole of the Pir Pantsal Range from the Banihal Pass to its end at Baramulla provides a fascinating ground for the adventurous tourist who is fond of climbing summits, camping by the side of small and big tarns, picturesquely placed by nature in the bosom of wild mountain scenery, hunting big and small game in the forests or trekking through charming undulating alpine valleys or exploring routes, over this lofty and grand range and across glaciers, only known to goat-herds.

Some peaks like the Sunset peak 15,567 ft. or Tratakoti 15,500 ft. have been climbed, but there are many other virgin peaks, like Brahma Peaks near Konsarnag calling for the mountaineer's attention. There are bewitching lakes like Konsarnag and many others.

Trip to Konsarnag: (From Skt. Kramasaras, *Krama* footstep and *saras* lake). It is also known as Visnupad, (the Foot of Visnu). The three km long lake at an altitude of 12000 ft. and almost surrounded by three towering snowy peaks in the Pir Pantsal Range, the highest of them rising to a height of 15,523 ft. is a grand spectacle. It remains almost frozen till the middle of June. Numerous ice floes can be seen floating like small sailing boats on its blue rippling waters which reflect the lofty peaks surrounding it. There is a glacial valley at its southern end. The peaks with their bold pyramidal summits, form conspicuous objects in the panorama of the range, as seen from the valley.

Kashmir tradition locates on these peaks the seat from which Visnu, Siva and Brahma fought the water demon Jalodbhave and desiccated Satisaras. The western most and the highest is said to have been the site of Naubandhana Tirtha. In the Indian version of the deluge. Visnu in his Matysa (fish) Avatara had bound to this peak the Nau (Ship into which Durga had converted herself) to save the seeds of beings from destruction. Konsarnag lies at the foot of this peak. The lake can be reached by different routes:—

1. Srinagar to Shupian: 48 km by bus, ponies or porters are available here.

Shupian to Ahrabal Waterfall: 13 km. Good motor road. Here the river Vishov falls some 50 ft. over a precipice and is a wonderful sight, especially in the morning or at noon when the rays of the sun breaking on the spray form rainbows. The fall is seen best from the right bank.

Ahrabal to Kongawatan: 13 km. Path through forests on the right bank of the river. It is a small grassy valley surrounded by pines and firs. and connected by a road.

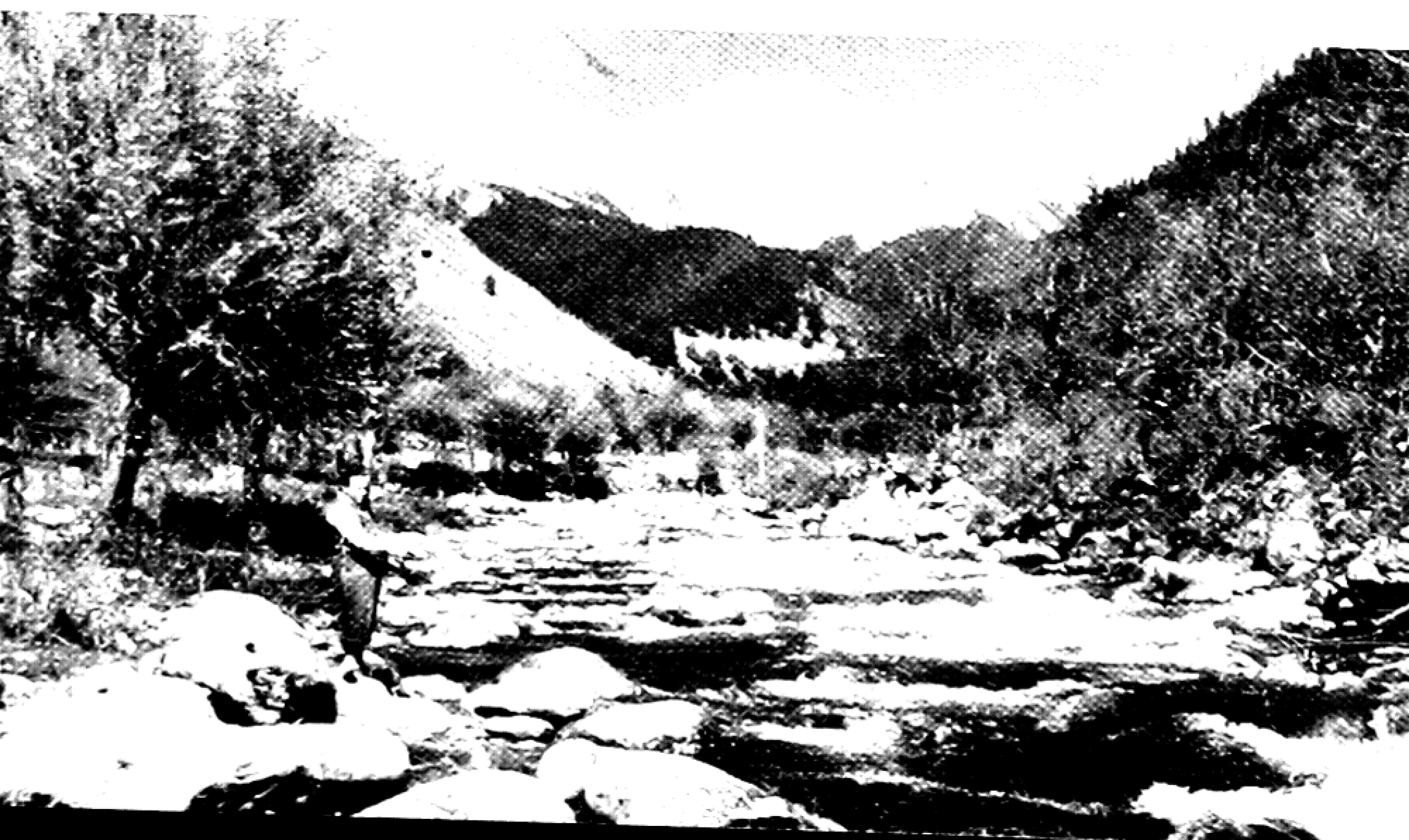
Kongawatan to Konsarnag: 16 km. Good path along the right bank to Mahinag and some way beyond and then across to the other bank over the bouldered bed of the river. Then ascend 1000 ft. to the pass overlooking the lake. Then down to the lake. Tourists desirous of exploring the surrounding mountains may set up their camp here. Others can come back to Mahinag or further down to Kongawatan.

Across the lake there is a camp of gaddis (Hindu Gujars) who come from Reasi in summer with their flocks of sheep. They are very hospitable. With a party of teachers from CMS School Srinagar, the writer went to the southern end along the steep bank of the lake to the left side and



Konsarnag Lake

Fishing in Bringhi Stream

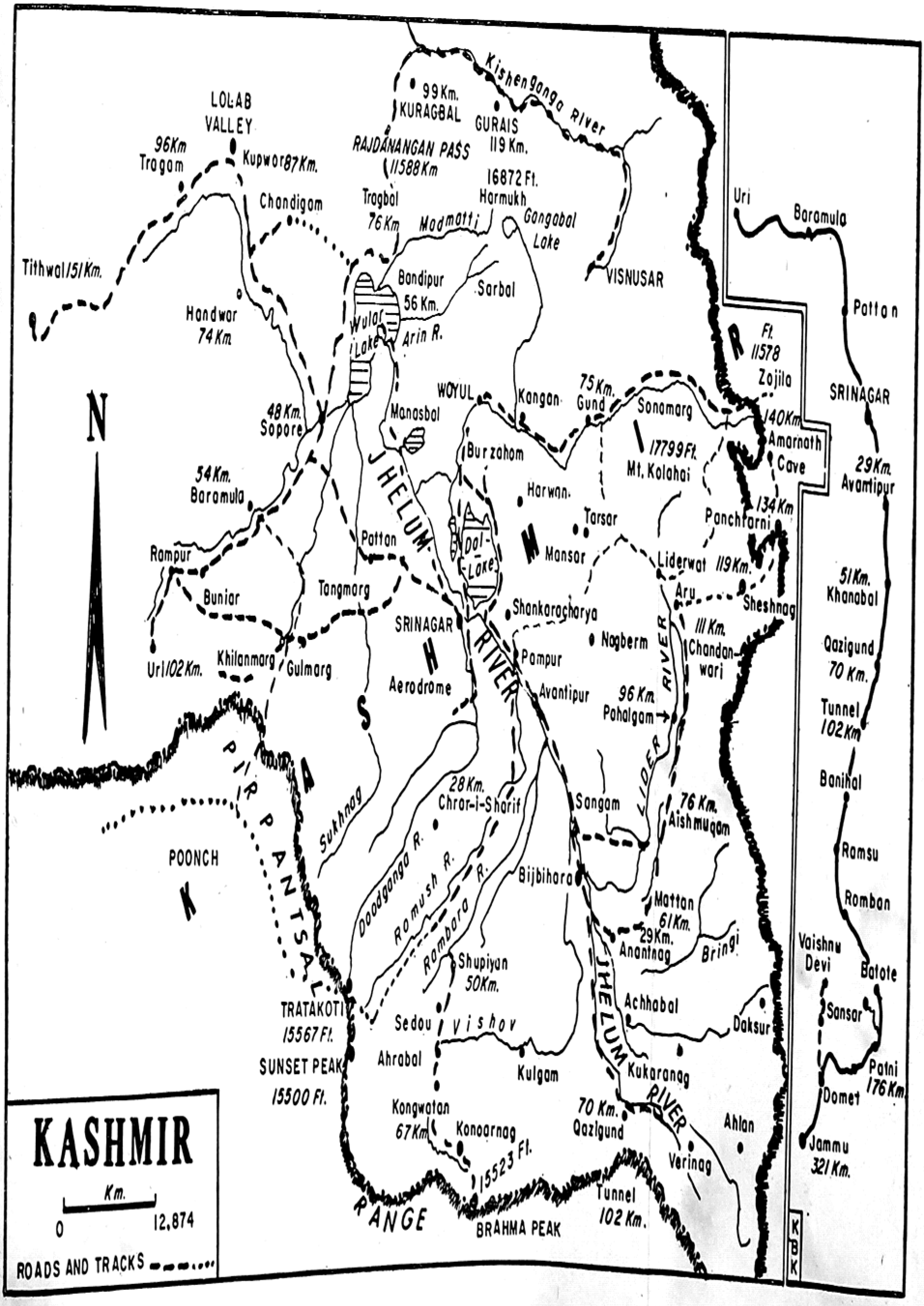




Tourist Hut at Yusmarg

Doodganga Valley





KASHMIR
Km.
0
12,874
ROADS AND TRACKS
LOLAB VALLEY
96Km Tragam
Kupwor87Km.
99Km. KURAGBAL
GURAIS 119 Km.
RAJDANANGAN PASS 11588 Km
Kishenganga River
16872 Ft. Harmukh
Gangabal Lake
Chandigam
Tragbal 76 Km
Madmatti
Tithwal 151 Km.
Handwar 74 Km
Bandipur 56 Km.
Sarbal
VISNUSAR
Wular Lake
Arin R.
48 Km. Sopore
WOYUL
Kangan
75 Km. Gund
Sonamarg
Ft. 11578 Zojila
140 Km
Amarnath Cave
Manasbal
Burzahom
17799 Ft. Mt. Kolahai
54 Km. Baramula
Harwan
Tarsar
Panchtarni
134 Km
Rampur
Pattan
Dal Lake
Mansar
Liderwat
119 Km.
Aru
Sheshnag
Buniar
Tangmarg
SRINAGAR
Shankaracharya
Nagberm
111 Km. Chandanwari
Uri 102 Km.
Khilanmarg
Gulmarg
Aerodrome
Pampur
Avantipur
96 Km. Pahalgam
JHELUM RIVER
LIDER RIVER
PIR PANTSAL
28 Km. Chrar-i-Sharif
Sangam
76 Km. Aishmuqam
Sukhnag
POONCH
Doodganga R.
Romush R.
Rambara R.
Bijbihara
Mattan 61 Km.
29 Km. Anantnag
Bringi
Shupiyan 50 Km.
TRATAKOTI 15567 Ft.
Sedou
Vishov
Achhabal
Daksur
SUNSET PEAK 15500 Ft.
Ahrabal
Kulgam
Kukaranag
Kongwatan 67 Km
Konoarnag
15523 Ft.
70 Km. Qazigund
Ahlan
Verinag
RANGE
BRAHMA PEAK
Tunnel 102 Km.
Uri
Baramula
Pattan
SRINAGAR
29 Km. Avantipur
51 Km. Khanabal
Qazigund 70 Km.
Tunnel 102 Km
Banihal
Ramsu
Romban
Vaishnu Devi
Batote
Sansar
Patni 176 Km.
Domet
Jammu 321 Km.
KBK

crossing the snowfield at the foot of the Brahma Shakri Peak, at the head of the snowbound valley, climbed the 14500 ft. peak and then returned to the camp in the evening by the right side, thus rounding the lake. Time taken was 12 hours. A couple of us crossed the lake in a rubber canoe.

Reasi in Jammu Province can be reached by following the route on the other side from the pass at the foot of this mountain. There is another pass leading down into Jammu Province, some three km from the northern end of the lake towards the south-west.

II. Srinagar to Kulgam: 61 km. By bus. Porters can be hired at Kulgam and then one proceeds to Avil (16 km) on the right bank of Vishov.

Avil to Kongawatan: 16 km. Steep ascent through the forest. Then descent to Chitta-pani. Crossing by a log bridge. A steep ascent again and down to Kongawatan.

Kongawatan to Konsarnag: (see p. 96)

Srinagar to Rajouri via Old Moghul route across Pir Pantsal: Srinagar to Shupian by bus 50 km. Arrange transport here.

Shupian to Hurapur: Ancient Surapur named after Sura, the famous minister of Avantivarmana. There used to be a fort here guarding this route. The path follows the right bank of Rambiara river, then gradually ascends as the valley becomes narrower. Six km beyond is a fine camping ground, Sukhsarai, and the path is through meadows brilliant with flowers.

Hurapur to Aliabad Sarai: 21 km. Beyond Suksarai after fording the river, the path ascends steeply. Then through broken ridges and precipices, the path ascends to Aliabad, the Moghul Hospice.

Aliabad to Poshiana: 18 km a small village only in-

habited in summer. The path gently ascends to the pass 11,500 ft. (summits on either side rise to the height of 14,000 to 15,000 ft.). Then it descends to Chitta Pani, over snow in early summer, but zigzags down the slope later. Then it crosses Chitta Pani. After ascent of an hour and a half there is an easy path to Poshiana. If one camps at Sukh-sarai on the first day, camping at Aliabad can be avoided and Poshiana can be reached the next day. Total distance to be covered will be 32 km in that case.

Poshiana to Bahramgalla: 16 km. From Poshiana a sharp but steep path descends along the spur to the torrent bed. Then the path follows the stream, which has to be crossed and recrossed many times over log bridges which are likely to be washed away in bad weather. After many ups and downs of the path, Bahramgalla, a small village shut up in mountains, is reached. There is a rest house. Porters may be changed here.

Bahramgalla to Thana Mandi: 16 km. The path now ascends, steeply at places, through forests of elm, chest-nuts, deodar etc. to the top of the Rattan Pir Pass 8200 ft. Here the road to Poonch branches off to the right. From the pass, one descends to Thana Mandi.

Thana Mandi to Rajouri: 23 km. The path now descends steadily through grand scenery. The river has to be crossed twice.

Rajouri to Jammu: 160 km by bus.

Rajouri to Poonch: 87 km by bus.

Tourists intending to trek along to Poonch may take the following route.

Bahramgalla to Sooran: 24 km. The path after reaching the top of the Rattan Pir Pass (see above), bran-ches off on the right, then descends steeply to the river and after a few kilometres crosses the Chitta Pani stream and then comes to Sooran.

Sooran to Poonch: 16 km. by bus.
Poonch to Jammu: 246 km.

Excursions from Yusmarg

(Srinagar to Yusmarg see p. 72)

The following excursions may be undertaken:—

1. A climb to the Sunset Peak (15567 ft.).
2. A trip to Chhats Kani (Chitta Pather) the source of Doodganga, and a climb to Tratakoti Peak 15560 ft.
3. A trek to Gulmarg via Toshmaidan.
4. A trek to Poonch via Tratakoti Pass.

Note: Arrangements for porters or ponies should be made at Yusmarg.

1. Climb to the Sunset Peak.

Yusmarg to Durgalotun: 16 km. Path up and down through forests. Durgalotan is a small narrow valley. Gujar huts about, milk and eggs may be available.

Durgalotan to Danzab: 13 km, gradual ascent to the plateau through wooded foot hills. Danzab is a grassy open Marg. Aconites, a poisonous herb, is found in abundance here. Base camp for the climb may be set up here, or at the foot of the glacier five km south of it.

Climb to Sunset Peak: Leave camp early. Cross the Romus and follow the stream along the right bank for about five km to the foot of the glaeier. It has no dangerous crevasses. Climb over the glacier till you come to the main rocky peak, which looks like a giant, crouching lion. A fine view of the plains on the southern side is rewarding enough. Return to the camp at Danzab. From Danzab one may return to Yusmarg or continue the excursion to Chita Pathar which is about 10 km south west of Danzab.

II. Excursion to Chita Pathar.

Yusmarg to Durgalotun: see above or to Frasnag, a copious spring of ice-cold water, six km west of Durgalotan.

Frasnag to Chita Pathar: 10 km Cross Doodganga over the bridge one mile beyond and then continue along the left bank to the end of the valley. Camp here at Navuk at the foot of the small gorge through which the river dashes out.

Chita Pathar to Tratakoti Peak: (15560 ft.). The path continues in the southerly direction along the left bank for about a couple of kilometers after crossing the low saddle near the camp and turns west. Then it ascends gradually through rocks and then over shale and scree till one comes to Chhotigali Pass, 14,100 ft. leading to Bharam-galla (see p. 98). For climb to the peak do not cross the pass. Continue cautiously along the scree covered steep slope to the foot of the Tratakoti Peak. Scramble up to the rugged and serrated peak. Return by the same route to the camp. There are many mountain tarns in this Doodganga valley which are worth a visit. There are glaciers too, with steep passes into the Jammu Province.

Return to Yusmarg the same way or continue the trek to Gulmarg.

III. Yungmarg to Gulmarg: via Tosmaidan.

Yusmarg to Prasnag: see p. 99

Prasnag to Dorein: via Miskan and Diskal—16 km. Cross Doodganga by bridge. Ascend through forest to Miskan and then over several miles of moorland, crossing the river from Tratakoti, to Miskan 11,000 ft. Then down to Dorein 9500 ft, where there are shepherd huts. Camp here.

Dorein to Bandi: 10 hrs. Gradual ascent to Hakakhal a Gujar village. Then crossing Lal Alam Shah ridge one

comes to the rolling grassy undulating alpine land of Tosamaidan. 10,000 ft. extending over several miles. In summer thousands and thousands of cattle and sheep are seen grazing here. From Tosmaidan there is a gentle climb to Kralnag Pass 12,002 ft. Then descent of 800 ft. to Bandi a shepherd encampment.

Bandi to Gulmarg: 6 hrs. Descend to the route from Ferozpur Nallah to Poonch and follow the steep path down to Gulmarg through forest.

Gulmarg to Srinagar: 52 km.

CHAPTER VII

EXCURSIONS FROM AND ROUND GULMARG

Gulmarg to Gagrinag: Frozen lakes and back. These lakes are situated at the foot of the main Apharwat peak 14,800 ft. and behind the ridge separating them from Khilanmarg (see p. 68). There is a bridle path leading upto the top of the ridge 12500 ft. From here it goes down to Allopathri meadow and then up through the valley to the lakes. The nearest way to go will be over the boulder strewn slope of the mountain to the path below and then to the lakes—which remain frozen till the middle of June. Ice floes floating on its blue waters and the reflection of the glacier on the opposite precipitous mountain side make it an awe-inspiring, grand sight. Back to Gulmarg by the same way. There is a longer route to the lakes from Dhobighat at the north-western end of the valley. It goes up a narrow ravine to Allopathri valley and then gradually ascends through it to the lakes.

Gulmarg to Ferozpur Nallah: five km down the valley. Follow the old bridle path leading down to Tangmarg from the gap down for 3 km and then strike towards the south through forest. Then descend the slope to the stream. Cross the bridge and up on the right bank—a picnic spot. To see the stream rushing down through the gorge or from under the snow bridges in early summer is an exciting sight.

Gulmarg to Ningal Nullah: 10 km. Another picnic spot is on the bank of the stream. The road goes through thick pine and fir forests. It is a quiet and charming and

refreshing spot. From here one can ride to the open Lilanmarg, three miles towards the west, over undulating and gradually rising meadows.

Ziarat of Babarishi: It is a holy Muslim shrine five km from the middle gap on the east of this valley. The path leads down through 'thick forest'. The Ziarat (Tomb of the Saint) is that of Baba Pam Din, a noted Muslim Rishi, who lived here during the Moghul rule. There are many guest houses providing accommodation for a large number of pilgrims who visit the shrine during the annual Urs. Both Muslims and Hindus make offerings at the Ziarat.

Trip to Banibali Nag: 9,600 ft. It is a lakelet formed by landslides above the Ferozpur Nullah and 5 hours journey from Gulmarg. Start early and return to Gulmarg in the evening.

Excursion to Kantar Nag: 13250 ft. 3 days trip. It is a lakelet on the top of the mountain. One can have a view of the Poonch side from here. On the first day, camp may be pitched up on the ravine some 2000 ft. above. On the second day visit the lake and return to the camp. Or return to Gulmarg if in a hurry.

Gulmarg to Tosamaidan: 3 days going and 2 days returning. Good forest path up the crest of the ridge. First day camp at Danwas, second day camp at Tejjan, third day at Tosamaidan, fourth day back to Danwas and fifth day back to Gulmarg.

From Tosamaidan one may return by a different route visiting Sukhnag, the source of the Ningal Nallah and then returning to Gulmarg or Srinagar via Magam by bus.

Gulmarg to Rampur: On the Uri-Srinagar road. First day to camp in deodar forest below Lilanmarg, second day to Rampur and from there back to Srinagar by bus. A



Gulmarg

Skiing at Gulmarg





Shankarbulbul—Doodgana Valley

Gagrinag—Allopatri Ice floes in the Lake



few miles above Rampur at Buniar is an ancient temple in a well preserved condition. It is of great interest for an archaeologist (see p. 79).

Gulmarg to Baramulla: Baramulla, ancient Varahmulla, enjoyed the sanctity since early times, as the dwelling place of Visnu in the incarnation of 'Adivaraha' or Primal Boar. The ancient temple of Varaha (according to the Rajatarangini) was situated on the right bank, below the township. It was here that Visnu is said to have assumed the form of a boar to slay the Daitya (demon) Hiranyakashpa and raised the earth on his tusks. The site still attracts a large number of pilgrims from all over Kashmir. There is a Muslim Ziarat of Janbab Sahib. It has a big cauldron in which food is cooked for the Muslims who come to the Ziarat.

Baramulla is 55 km from Srinagar and 74 km from Gulmarg by the main road, but it is connected with Gulmarg by a 24 kilometer bridle path along the foothills and through fields. The river Jehlum ceases to be navigable, below Baramulla. A trip in a houseboat or a doonga up the river through the Vular lake to Srinagar will be very refreshing and relaxing through the beautiful, placid river landscape.

Baramulla is a large town, a business centre mostly for fruit, and headquarter of the district. It was the seat of the Dvarapati, the Lord of the Gate, in the times of ancient Hindu kings.

From Baramulla a sportsman desirous of shooting 'markhor' can arrange a trip to Kazinag mountain, to the west of it. This area is the main habitat of Markhor. Permission has to be obtained from the Defence Dept. Govt. of India.

Srinagar to Lolab: 128 km. This pretty small valley, separated from the Vular lake by the Nagmarg range is

known as Chhota Kashmir. It is five to six kilometers wide and 19 km long. Its peculiar beauty lies in wide park-like expanse of meadows and orchards in which villages are almost buried from sight, while the valley is fringed with low deodar-clad hillocks and shut in by dense forests. Bears are a great attraction for big game hunters. The valley is now connected with Srinagar by a good motorable road. Buses run daily from Srinagar to Sogam and other important villages located here. There are forest rest houses at some of the beauty spots, such as Doras, Chandigam, Kumbrail, Renawari and Kitardaji. Permission for their use should be obtained from the Forest Department. A trek from one of these places to Bandipur on the bank of the Vular lake will be very interesting. A view of the Vular and the valley beyond from the top of the Rampur-Rajpur range will be most rewarding.

Srinagar to Gurais: 120 km. Gurais valley is a narrow picturesque valley formed by the Kishanganga river, a rapid of ice-cold water in its upper reaches. It has its source in the spring at Chorvan. Mainly its waters are fed by glacier snows from Burzul, Kumri and other places. At Bodvan near Kanzalvan there is a grand grove of giant poplars. It is a paradise for anglers for trout fishing.

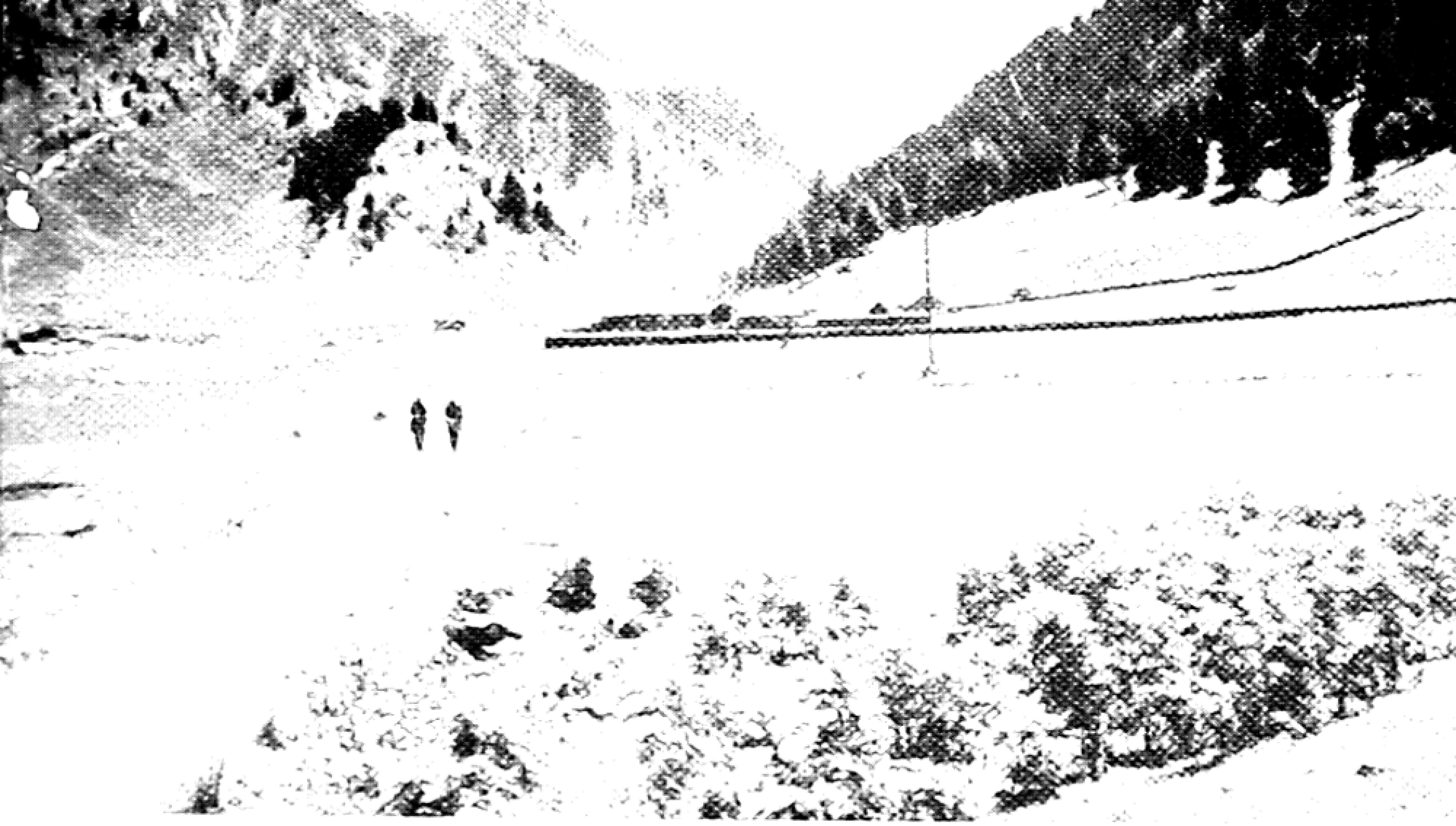
Route: -

Srinagar to Bandipur by bus: Bandipur is a small township at the foot of Tragbal mountain on the bank of the Vular lake and 56 km from Srinagar. From this place there is a jeepable road to Gurais via Tragbal, where there is a rest house commanding a magnificient view of the Vular lake and the valley. The road goes over the Rajadangan Pass 12,000 ft. and descends into Gurai Nullah rather steeply and goes along the foot of the mountain to Kanzalvan. Then through a large forest of giant poplars at

Bodvan to Gurais, the headquarter of the district. The people are known as Dards and speak Dardi. Ibex shooting is the main attraction for the sportsmen. Gurai Nullah on the other side of Tragbal mountain, is covered with numerous wild flowers. Trout is found in the Kishenganga river.

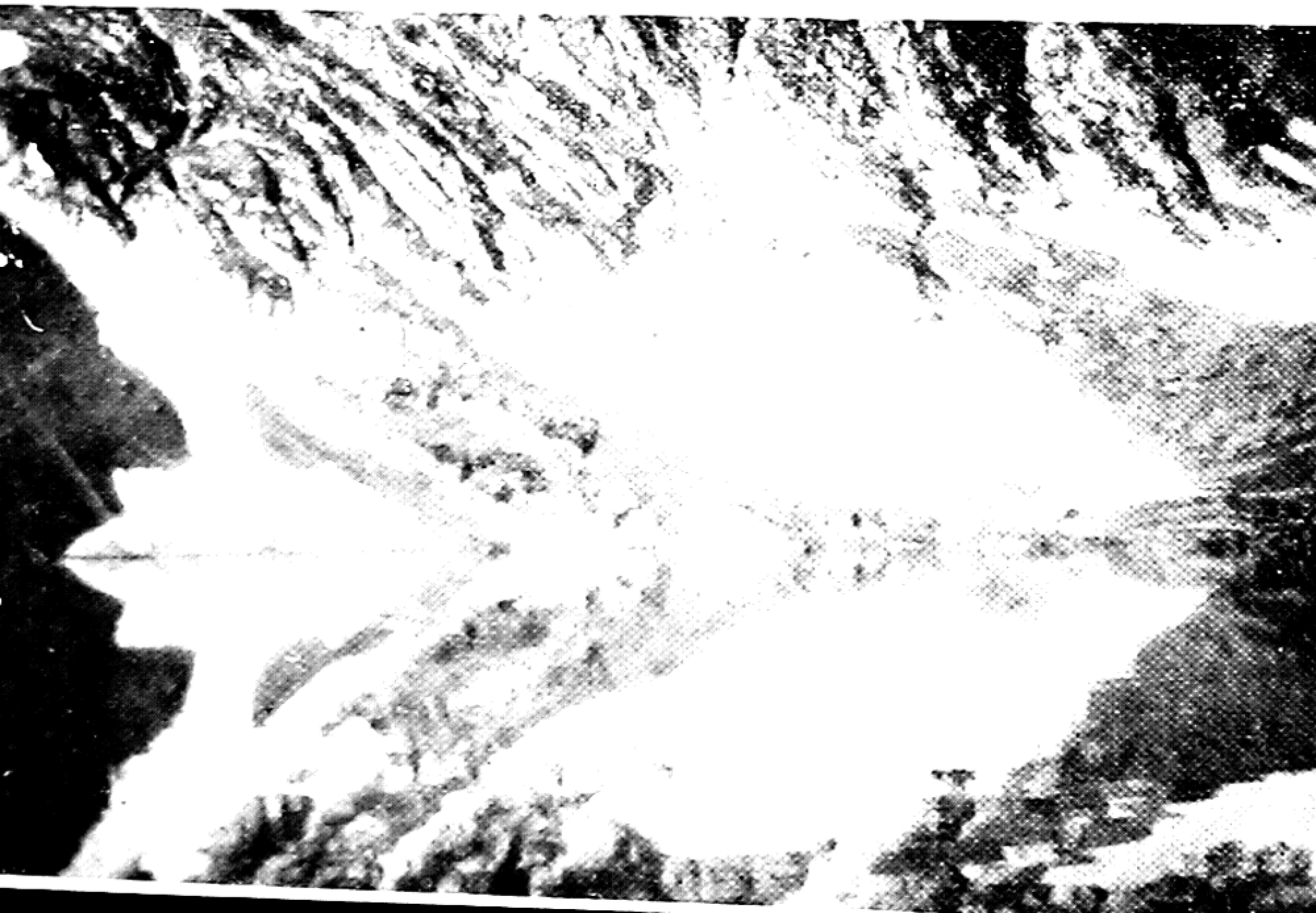
From Gurais treks can be undertaken to Drass, Baltal and Sonamarg or *vice-versa*, subject to permission from the Defence Dept.

●



Sonamarg

Glacier reflected in Vishensar Lake





Home of Muskdeer

Satsaran Pass



Nundkol Lake at the foot of Haramukh 16,872 ft.



CHAPTER VIII

GANGBAL VALLEY

Gangabal lake, also known as Harmukata Ganga or Uttar Ganga, is one of the most sacred places of pilgrimage for the Hindus of Kashmir. Thousands of pilgrims take the ashes of their dead for immersion into its sacred waters in the month of September each year. But apart from its religious sanctity, its location at the foot of the Harmukh glacier and its setting amdist the varied and idyllic scenery, the large lake at 12,000 ft. (about two km by a km and a half) should be a great attraction for visitors who love nature. Nature is here in her varied glory. There are meadows covered with wild flowers of all colours and hues. There are grand lofty mountains with snow clad towering summits, which reflect various patterns of delicate shades as the sun and the clouds pass over the rippling azure waters of the Nundkol and Gangabal lakes. The legend goes that it was here amidst this bewitching scenery, that Uma, the consort of Siva, squeezed Ganga out of his matted hair, as he tried to hide her in them. Looking at the towering Haramukh peak, with corniced glaciers on the top, and the tiny rills running down its steep sides, as if squeezed out by the impact of the sun on them, the metaphor seems to be quite appropriate.

Above, below and around the central lake of Gangabal and spread over several kilometers, there are other lakes as attractive and charming as this one. These are Loolgul and Andansar at 13,500 ft. and above it to the north. There is Nundkol, 500 ft. below it to the east, spread out as a blue carpet at the feet of the mighty Lord Hara. This

lake is also called Kaladaka or Nandisar, said to be the joint habitation of both Kala, i.e. Siva and his faithful attendant Nandin (the bull). There is the Kolasar, some four and a half kilometer below it, in the bosom of overhanging lofty peaks and mountain ranges, which shut out the light and give its waters a sombre look. There is Brahmasar, a shallow lakelet, separated from Kolasar by the rocky wall of Hamsdar. Parasu Ram is said to have performed his penance on the banks of these lakes.

There is an ideal camping ground on the left bank of Nundkol. It is protected from cold winds by a low hillock on the back, while the front commands a magnificient view of the hoary Harmukh Peak, standing several thousand feet above at the head of this charming small lake. It is best in the morning when the first rays of the sun bathe the mighty summit in its pink morning glory, the reflection of which dances on the rippling waters of the lake—thus presenting an enchanting sight. This valley if developed into a holiday resort will be a place of great attraction for tourists, but may be, in that event it will lose its charm of quietness and solitude. Besides the Haramukh Peak 16,872 ft. offers a great attraction for a mountaineer. About the climb to the peak see p. 116.

Another charm about this place is that it can be reached by several different routes through varied scenery.

I. The pilgrim route:—

Srinagar to Prang via Gandarbal: 32 km. Pack ponies to be previously arranged at Prang or at Kangan. Provisions and tentage to be carried from Srinagar. Then on foot to Ramaradhan (Skt. Ramaaradhan, the seat of meditation of Parasurama) at the foot of the Barat, which stands at the head of the Chhatragul valley. Camp for the night here. But there is no suitable site. So, if early in the day, start climbing up the Barat mountain and camp

at Mahalesh 9000 ft. a small exposed meadow on the top of it. The climb is stiff in places where laden ponies have to be helped. Juniper wood available at Mahalesh. Long ago it is said that at this place several thousands pilgrims perished in a snow storm.

Mahalesh to Brahamasar: 10 km. An easy leisurely walk along the undulating alpine meadows is delightful. Pilgrims perform Shradhas for the departed souls here.

Brahamasar to Gangabal: 10 km by the short and easy road, along gradually rising meadows, but pilgrims take the longer and devious route over the bouldered slope via Hamsadar Pass into Kolasar valley. Then along the gradually ascending meadows to Nundkol and from there to camp on the bank of the Gangabal lake 16 km.

Gangabal to Narannag: 19 km. After bathing in the ice-cold waters of the lake and performing Shradhas for their dead, the pilgrims begin their return journey to Narannag (see p. 77) via Tronkhol. Hapatgand and Butsher (Butesvara). From the top of the Butsher the descent is quite steep through fir and pine forests. This can be very slippery in wet weather.

Narannag to Srinagar: 51 km. Three km to Wangat and then 48 km by bus.

II. The easiest and the most convenient route will be as:—

Srinagar to Wangat: 50 km by bus. Make necessary arrangements for ponies here.

Wangat to Gangabal: 23 km, gradual climb to Narannag. Then a stiff climb of three km, through forest will bring one to the top of Butsher . Then the bridle path goes along the mountain side for another 6 km, where it ascends rather steeply and then descends to Tronkhol, three km further on. Tronkhol is a quiet place in the midst of the forest. There are some Gujar huts here.

Formerly there was a forest rest house here which was burnt down by the raiders. From Tronkhol, there are six km to the Gangabal lake over beautiful gradually ascending alpine meadows.

It would be comfortable to camp at Tronkhol, where fuel is abundant. In this case Kolasar which is a little lake a couple of km from here, can be visited. Then one can go over the Hamsadar Pass to Brahmasar lake and return by the easy path through meadows after rounding the Hamsadar mountain. Or if in a hurry to return, one can go to see the Gangabal lake and return to Tronkhol in the evening. Then next day by following the route to Narannag and Wangat from where one can catch a bus for Srinagar.

III. Srinagar to Nadihal: 50 km on the road to Bandipur by bus or by boat down the river and through the Vular lake. Arrange for ponies here or at Bandipur, preferably beforehand. Start for Koodor if early in the day, otherwise camp a kilometer or two above the village to avoid mosquitoes and other pests.

Nadihal to Koodor: 24 km. The path leads through rice and maize fields to Koodor, a village at the head of the Erin Nullah valley. Camp some distance outside the village.

Koodor to Sarabal: 13 km. Follow a couple of kilometers to where the valley bifurcates. Leave Chitrasar Nullah on the left. Keep to the right. Gradual ascent through forests, at places over boulders—difficult for ponies, which have to be led through them, to Gunaspathri (plants which resemble a cobra, grow here in abundance, hence the name). Then leave forest and proceed along the bank of the stream through meadows to Sarabal, which is one of the small open charming valleys with a couple of lakelets at the upper end. Set up a base camp here, if one intends

to climb the Haramukh Peaks (see p. 117) or one may proceed through the narrow valley on its left and camp at the foot of the Tsurlat Pass, 12,500 ft.—10 km further on.

Tsurlat to Gangabal: 6-8 hrs. Path zigzags up the steep face of the pass, stiffer just below the pass. (While going up, one of our pack ponies lost its foothold and rolled down the mountain side to the foot, where it breathed its last). From the top the path goes down to Sulanaisar, a lakelet in a shut up valley on the right. After crossing the small valley, one has again to find one's way through boulders, scattered pellmel on the mountain slope to the top of the Loolgul pass 13,500 ft. The ponies have to take a devious longer route to avoid these boulders. Loolgulsar is a small open lakelet nearly on the top of this pass. Then along its bank and then down the steep mountain side to Gangabal lake.

Andansar is another beautiful oval shaped lake with craggy peaks at the back. One may visit the lake on the way and then go down to Gangabal. From there follow the bank of the lake for a couple of kilometers, cross it at its mouths and then a descent of a kilometer will bring one to Nundkol camping site see p.

IV. **From Srinagar via Sonamarg to Gangabal.** Srinagar to Sonamarg: see p 71. Ponies available at Sonamarg.

On this route one comes across grand scenery of weird mountains with glaciers, meadows full of wild flowers, lakes of bright blue waters and passes over 13,000 ft.

Sonamarg to Nichinai: 6 hrs. Descend to the Sindh stream crossing it over the bridge. Then climb the steep forest covered mountain in the west to the top. Then follow the path down to the Nichinai valley. Camp here.

Nichinai to Visnusar: 7 hrs. Gradual ascent through the narrow valley and then steep ascent to the top of the

snowbound pass 13,500 ft. Then descend into the Visnusar valley, a beautiful charming flowery small valley almost level, with lofty mountains all round. Visnusar lake is at the foot of the glacier. Its sparkling water reflects the colours of the glacier snow and add to its charm. It is stocked with trout. Camp here.

Visnusar to Gadasar: 7 hrs. First steep climb of 400 ft. to Krishnsar, an almost dried up tarn in a shut up valley. Then 1000 ft. ascent to the top of the Pass 13,000 ft. Then steep descent over snow to Yemsar (The lake of death). Then gradual descent along the bank of Gadasar to the mouth of the gorge at the foot of Kasturgand mountain. The path leads through this gorge to Gorais via Tilel. One of the most beautiful rolling valleys. It will take three to four days to reach Gurais from Gadasar camp. No convenient place for a camp. It will be advisable to camp half a mile short of this place.

Gadasar to Gangabal: 10 hrs. The path now zigzags up the flowery steep mountain slope of Kusturgand. A very pleasing sight. It is the home of Kastura (muskdeer). From the top, the path goes along the mountain, on the right bank of the small stream, which disappears here in a deep hole (Rasabal) and then reappears at the foot of the gorge about a kilometer below. The path then continues through the boulders at Satsaran—a boulder strewn small valley with a number of pools. The ponies have to be lead through these boulders. Mengandub is on the top of this pass. Then again down about a kilometer and then a steep ascent over snow near the pass 13,500 ft. overlooking the Gangabal valley. The Pass commands a magnificent view of the mighty Harmukha opposite it,with Gangabal and Nundkol lakes mirroring its silvery diadem in their azure waters. Then a very steep tiring descent begins which takes one to the banks of Gangabal and then down

to the camping site at Nundkol see p. 110.

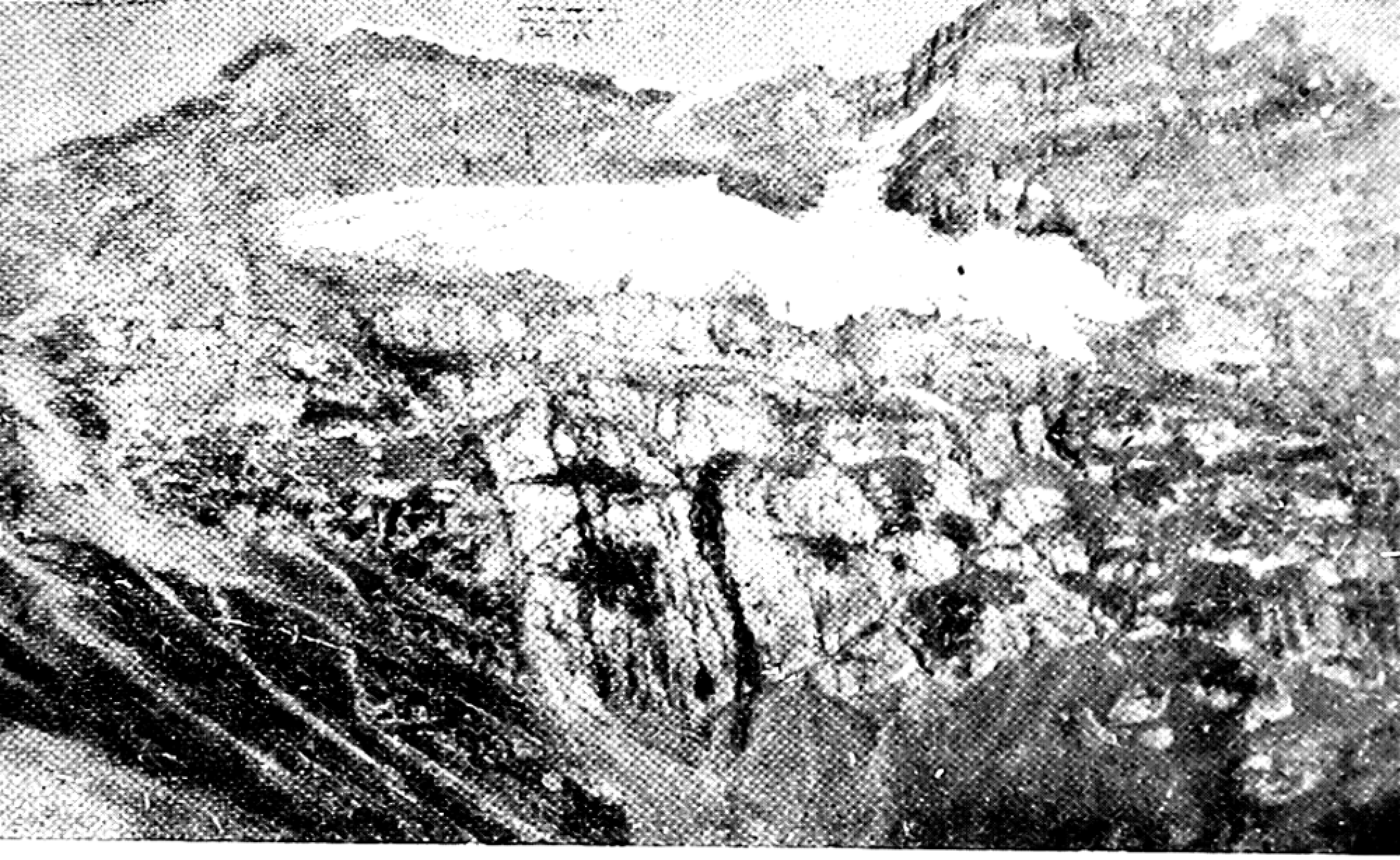
Gangabal to Srinagar via Narannag: see p. 111 or via Loolgul and Tsurlat passes see p. 113.

V. The more adventurous may return to Srinagar via Tresangam and Atawat. But no ponies can go on this route. Dr. Neve describes the route thus:

"On leaving Gangabal ascend from the head of the lake via Loolgul Nag as on the way to Erin Nullah. Then leaving Kalasar on the left go straight down the valley that is seen from the pass Loolgul Nag. This is Trisangam Nullah. There is no path, only steep tracks, at places very steep and unfit for laden ponies. For the first kilometer or two the descent is very steep. Then a torrent has to be forded, which brings one to goat tracks, leaving the stream on the right. Huge masses of boulders then make it impossible to keep by the stream, which again has to be forded. More goat tracks lead into a belt of firs and a little lower down the valley, another Nullah joins at Trisangam 11,000 ft. Camp here. There are Gujar huts and plenty of wood. The distance probably from Loolgul Nag is 13 km but the road is bad the whole way.

Trisangam to Atawat: Probably 12 miles (19 km), accomplished in 12 hrs as the track was bad. Cross the bridge from Trisangam and ascend steeply up the hill to probably 12000 ft. keep high up the hill side for 4 to 5 miles (8 km). The views are glorious. The way leads over a beautiful marg called Magan. This will be an excellent place to camp in June or July. Wood is plentiful. A km or two from Magan, the road descends a sheer spur, and is most dangerous for laden ponies. Then leaving the spur, the path descends sharply, down the mountain side on the left and finally to a small village. The path below the village is better though very bad in places. It descends at last to the stream which has to be forded,

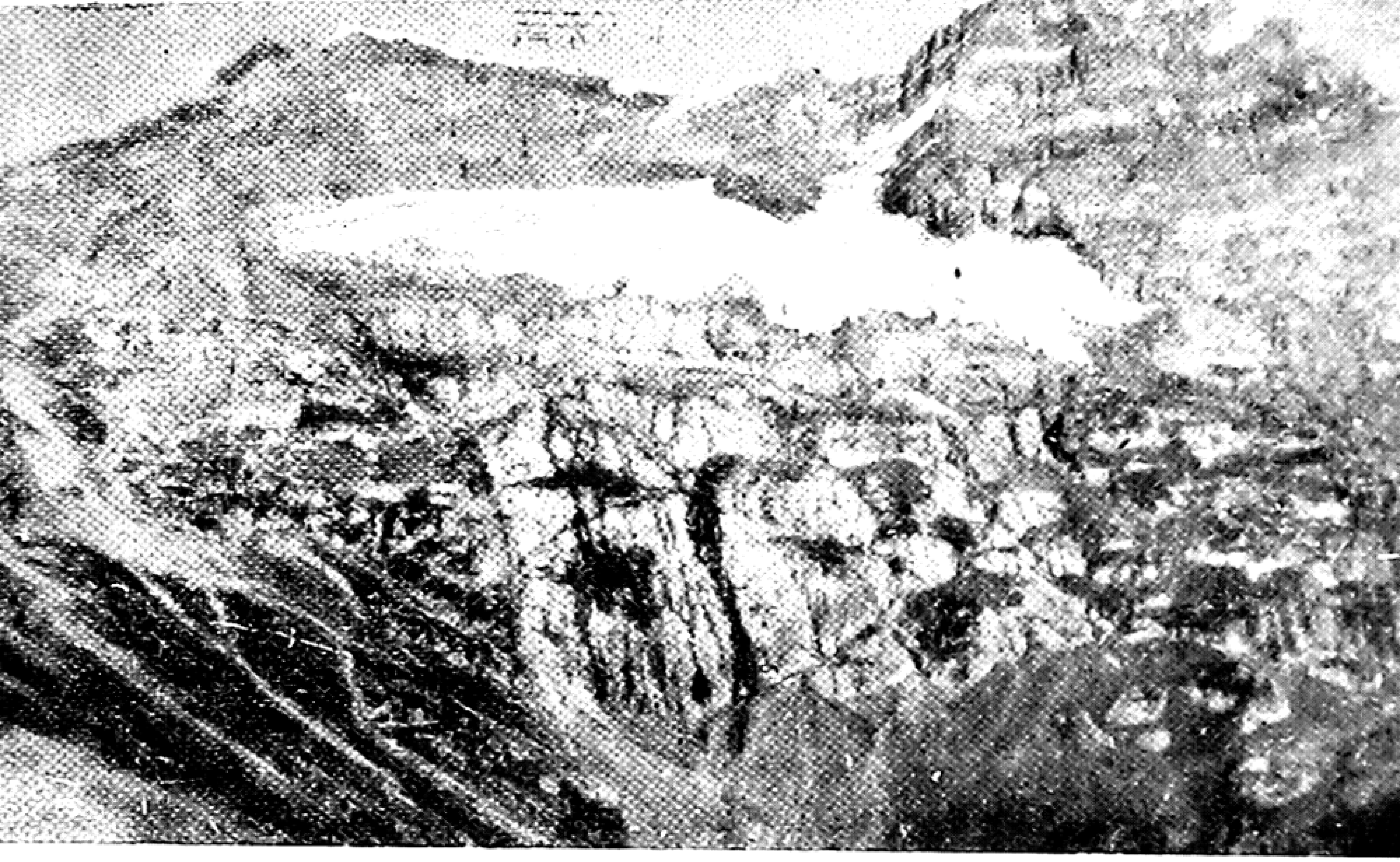




Mt. Haramukh 17,872 ft.

Gangabal Lake—12,500 ft.

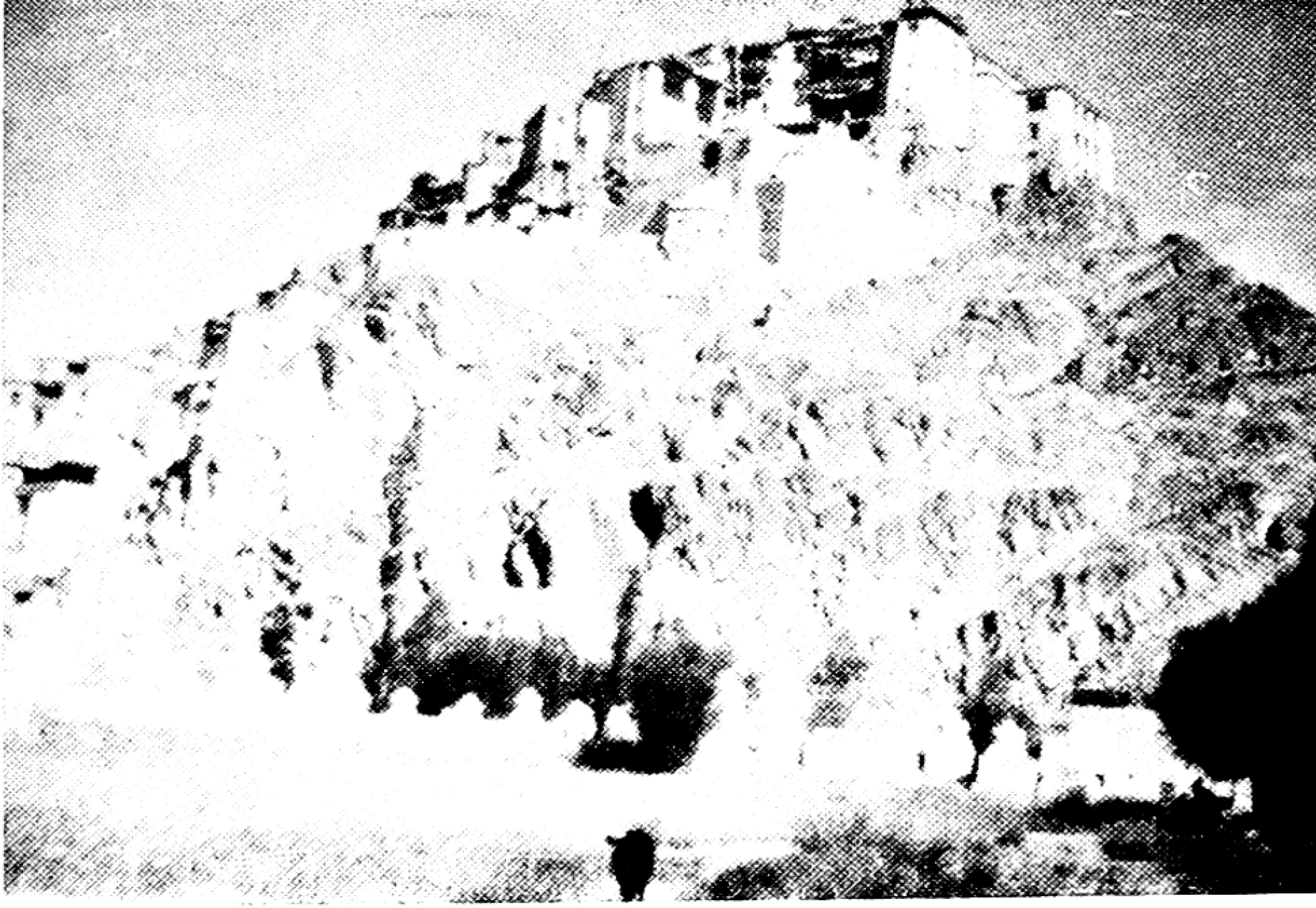




Mt. Haramukh 17,872 ft.

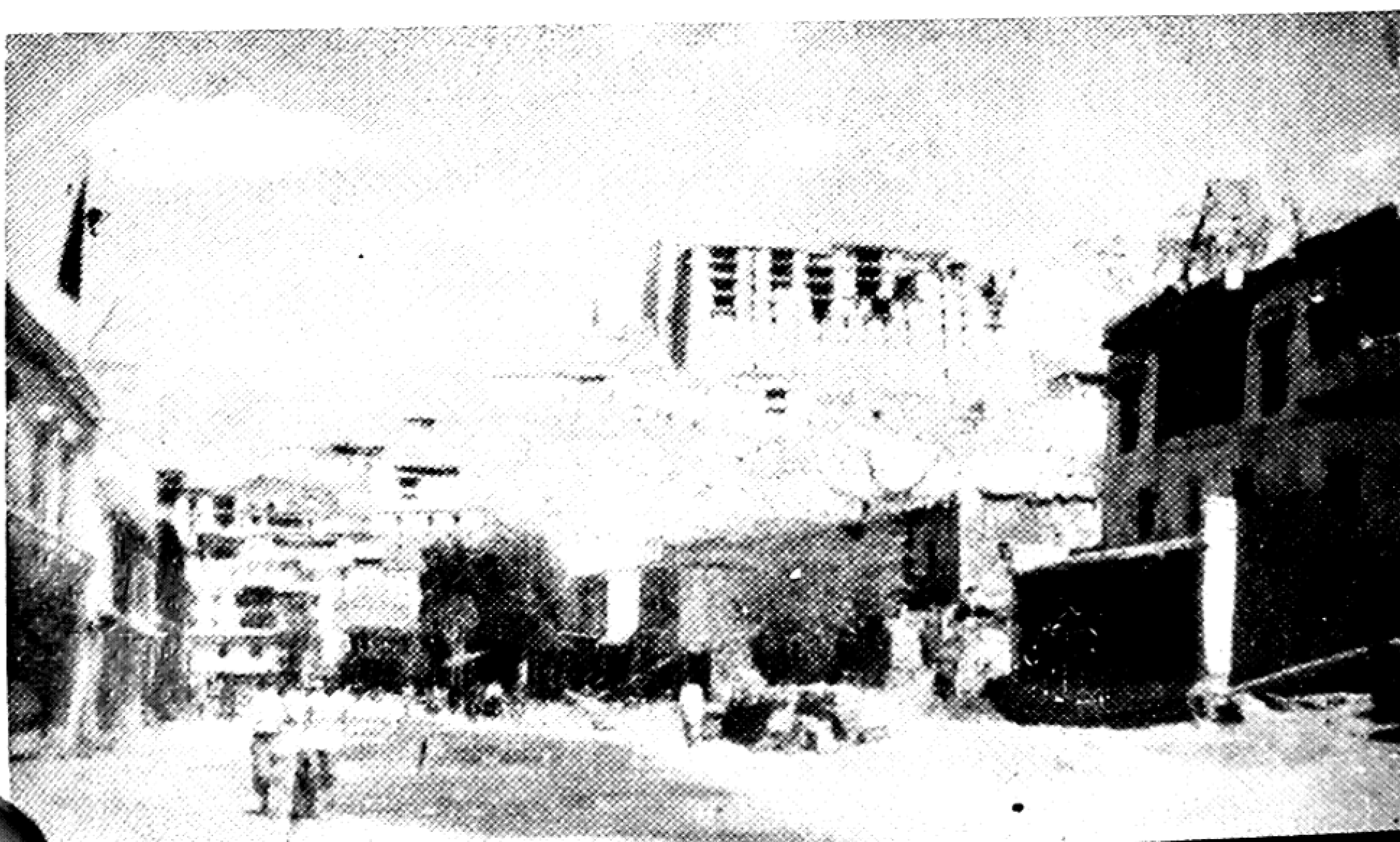
Gangabal Lake—12,500 ft.





Spitok Monastary—Leh

Leh Bazar—Palace in the Background



the bridge is worse than useless. Further down just by Atawat another stream has to be forded. There is a forest bungalow at Uskot, but no good camping ground.

Atawat to Bandipur: 9 miles (15 km). This is an easy stage. The first three or four miles (6 km) the road is rough, but improves as the valley widens out and a fine view of the Vular lake is seen and the road to Gorais is joined 3 or 5 miles (7 km) above Bandipur".

The road must be much better now. This was written years ago.

Bandipur to Srinagar: see p 112.

Climb to Mount Haramukh 16.872 ft.

Mount Harmukh with its gorgeous glaciers is one of the most striking features in Kashmir scenery. Its many prominent and dominating peaks cannot be missed while going down the Baramulla road or from Gulmarg and a climb to their summits will be a rewarding enterprise.

Believed to be the abode of gods, it is reputed to be inaccessible, but it was climbed by M.A. Stein in 1894, Dr. E.F. Neve and Col. Millias in 1912. from the south side Gen. Bruce climbed it from Gangabal side in 1902

It has three prominent peaks, the North or Traingulation peak 16,000 ft. The Middle Peak 16,500 ft. and the East Peak, the Haramukh 16,872 ft.

Base Camp at Sarabal—see p 112.

i. **North Peak:** This peak can be seen from the camp at the head of the glacier. Start early in the morning. Strike across to its foot. Begin to climb over the rocky mountain side, leaving the glacier on your right. Just below the glacier there is a chimney. One may climb through this to the top of the ridge and then follow on to the rocky summit, looking down steeply over the Gangabal

lake at its foot on the eastern side, or one may continue to climb over the snow field covering the steep slope below the peak. Return to the camp the same route, glissading down to the rocks again and then over them to the camp.

ii. **The Middle Peak:** 16,500 ft. It can be climbed from the North Peak. There is a steep snow field towards the south-east. Climb over it. Kicking steps may be necessary to avoid risk. Then once on the top of this snow field, strike across for a kilometer to the sword edge ridge, after crossing which one is at the foot of the Middle Peak. Climb over the rocks to the top. From here one can see the main peak just across the saddle covered with wind-slabs. But, by this time it may be quite late in the after-noon, so it is advisable to return to the camp before clouds start gathering on the mountain.

iii. **The Main Peak:** Mount Harmukh 16,872 ft. To summit and back to the camp in one day will be too strenu-ous a job and may be a great risk as one cannot predict what sort of weather the afternoon will bring. It will be less risky if it is done in two days as the writer did in 1944.

Sarabal to High Camp at 15,000 ft.: After an early lunch a gentle climb to Sarabal lake and then to Shirsar, a small tarn towards its east, will bring one to the foot of the very steep southern side of the mountain. Then a scramble up, of about two thousand feet over rocks and loose stone, takes one to top of the spur overlooking the glacier at the foot of the North Peak. Set up high-camp here. There is a small, almost level place for one tent, a bit sheltered from the wind. Time 3 hrs.

High Camp to the top and back to Base Camp: 10-12 hrs. Start early. Climb through and over very steep rocky mountain side for two to three hours till one is on the top of the snow field. Then easy going over snow to the sword blade edge overlooking Shirsar. Cross it carefully. Then

one is at the foot of the Middle Peak. Climb over rocks to the Peak. Then down the peak to the very narrow saddle, covered with windslabs and overlooking Shirsar at the foot of the precipice on the southern side, and on the northern side at the top of the grand glacier, literally littered with yawning crevasses. Cross it carefully and then climb the steep western side to the summit, wearing a magnificent snow cap on its glorious head. It overlooks the Nundkol lying at its foot on the east and charming Gangabal lake lying by its side on the north. All round there is a grand panorama of mighty mountain ranges and the bewitching beautiful valleys studded with sparkling water lakes all around. A sight for gods! Return the same way. By the time one is back at the base camp after this most thrilling adventure, it will be evening.

Return to Srinagar via Erin Nullah see p. 112 over the Tsurlat Pass.

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CHAPTER IX

LADAKH

"The large tract of land including Zanskar, Rupshu and Nubra, forming the upper basin of the river Indus, constitutes the province of Ladakh. It contains the loftiest inhabited districts in the world. No part of which is below 8,000 ft. and a large portion of whose population lives at elevations ranging between 11,000 ft. and 15,000 ft. above the sea level. Its towering mountains, grand in their barren massiveness, average from 17,000 to 21,000 ft., some of them even over 25,000 ft. The mountains being for the most part primitive, the decomposition of the granite and the felspar clothes the levels with a coating of clay, gravel and pebbles, which is only rendered productive by human industry and skill. The general aspect of the country when not under cultivation, is one of extreme sterility and barrenness in which the few willows and poplars are the only timber trees and the chief verdure that of tartaric furze, with a few tufts of wormwood, hyssop, dog rose and plants of the desert and the rocks expose, rather than conceal the barrenness of the soil." But since Independence irrigation facilities have been extended wherever humanly possible by digging canals. More land has been brought under the plough and afforestation undertaken on an impressive scale. Atmosphere is generally dry and rainfall scanty. In winter the cold is almost arctic and accompanied by bitter winds. Zho and Zebu oxen are used for ploughing. Wheat barley and buckwheat are raised as the main crops. Recently high yielding potatoes, cauliflower and other vegetables have been

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introduced. The only fruit is apricot and apples. Minerals are sulpher, soda, lead and iron.

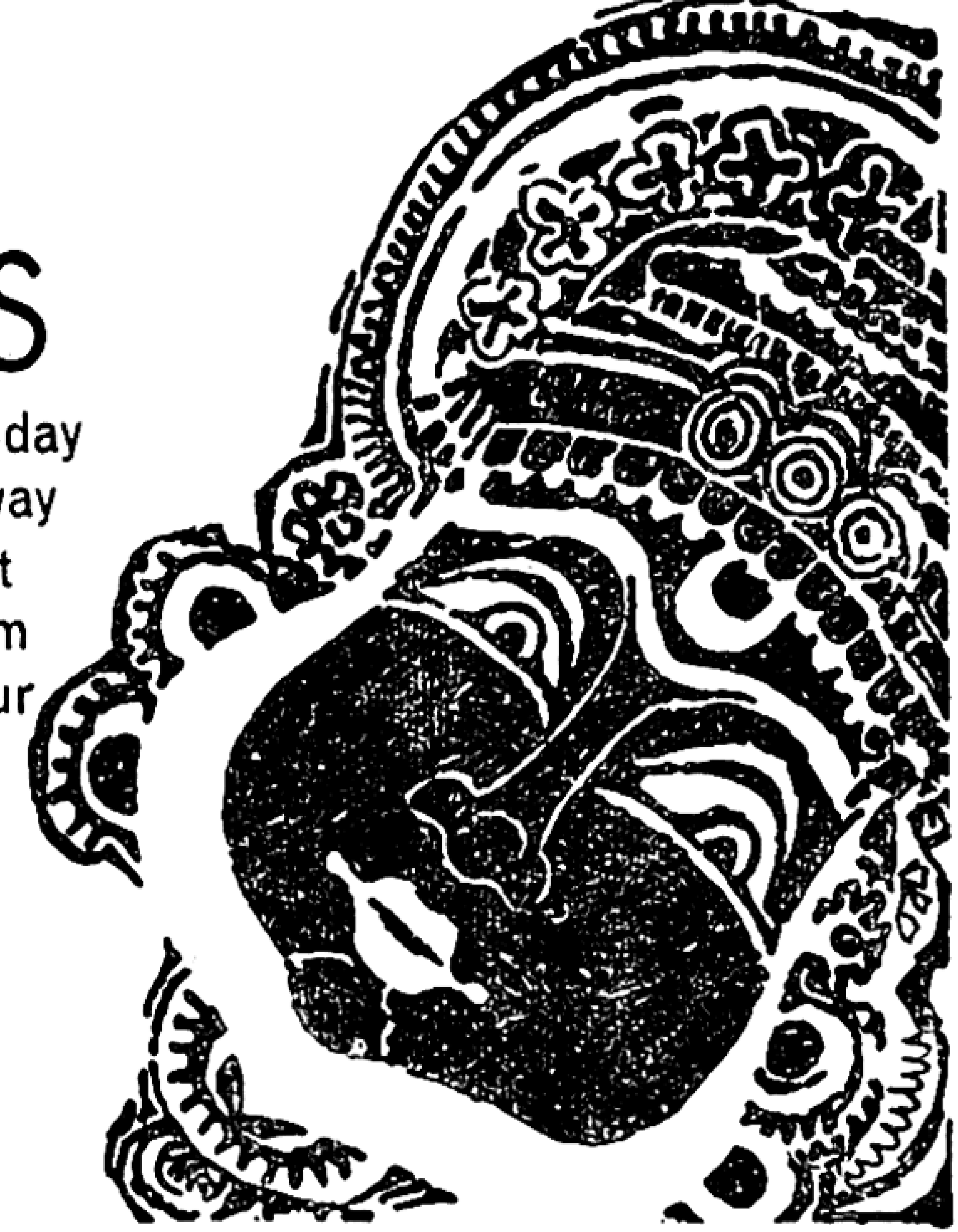
History: Long ago parts of the Western Ladakh and Zanskar were occupied by an Indo-Aryan Tribe called 'Mons' and they were either driven out or in part subjugated. The Dards also extended at another time to Leh itself, as is clear from their rock-sculptures and drawings at Khalatse and Hanupatar. It seems probable also that Kanishka and his successors (second century A.D.) extended their rule so far north. The Kashmir annals mention that Mihirakula (6th Century A.D.) the white Hun king, held sway over Tartary as well as North India. A century later Lalitaditya, the famous warrior king of Kashmir reconquered Ladakh. By the 10th century kings of Central Tibet ruled from near lake Mansarovar to the Zoji La Pass. By 1300 A.D. religious bonds with Lhassa were tightened and the old Bonchu demon worship was replaced by Lamaism.

Another hundred years later came Tsonkapa, the Lama reformer, but his success does not seem to have gone much deeper than the changed colour of the cap worn by Lamas.

One of the four noteworthy kings, Sengga Namgyal invaded Central Tibet about 1610 A.D. and his son Deldon seems to have been powerful. Then came the invasion of Mongols, which was successfully resisted. King Deldan invoked the help of Shah Jehan and with the advent of Muhammadans, who already held Baltistan and Purig, the Western Lama Kingdom tottered to its final fall.

Later Sikhs held Kashmir and Raja Ghulab Singh sent a bold leader, Zorawar Singh of Jammu, who had already sezied Kishtwar, across the passes to Ladakh. Zorawar was a born leader. He completely subdued Ladakh and Baltistan. Zorawar's ambition led him to embark on an expedition to Lhassa during winter, resulting in complete

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annihilation of his force on the snowy heights near Mansarowar. Finally, Ladakh was made over to Ghulab Singh by the Treaty of Amritsar in 1846, which also gave Kashmir to him.

The people are of Mongolian type, short and compact, except in Nubra. The men usually wear woollen caps, with earlaps, a pigtail, a very long sleeved cloak, loose trousers and felt garters and boots. The women wear long gowns with plaited skirts, sheep skin chogas and a clothcap. On gala days, they wear flat head dresses ornamented with large turquoises and brilliant dresses. The monks and nuns wear red or yellow caps and shaven heads. Muhammadans do not wear a pigtail.

The people are generally contented, cheerful and honest, neither quarrelsome nor revengeful, or rarely so under the influence of Chhang—a sort of barley beer. They are moreover fairly honest and simple minded. Polyandry was common till recent times, but now it is forbidden by law. Due to cultural and other contacts and influence, the present generation is fast changing their dress and other ways.

Most of the Ladakhis are agriculturists. The Zho, the hybrid between the Yak and the common cow, is used for ploughing. The Lamas assist in cultivating the soil and are in many places landlords. Formerly, most of the male population used to migrate to plains for work, but since Independence the influx of trade and the presence of the army and the development works started by the Government, have created more avenues for labour, so the migration has dwindled considerably.

Before Independence Ladakh was connected to Srinagar by a bridle path, and a person had to travel 400 kilometers through mountains and over passes ranging between 11000 ft. and 14000 ft. to reach it. There were

16 stages on this road and the traveller reached Leh in 8 days by forced marches on ponies. On top of it, the road remained closed for seven months during the year from November to June. Now a National Highway with good bridges and aqueducts has been constructed on which heavy vehicles can ply. Passenger services have been introduced and a tourist can reach Leh in two days by bus from Srinagar. Moreover, it has been put on the air map and one can be there in an hour from the airport at Chandigarh. This brings Ladakh within the reach of a tourist of average means.

Recently a motorable road has been constructed which connects Leh with the charming Nubra valley. Kargil is also being connected with Zanskar and provides an alternative road between Kargil and Khalatse, via Dahno, Garkon and Battalic. This road gives access to the mineral deposits of sulphur and borax at Pugga.

Besides, a network of roads is under construction, which will make Leh, the headquarter of the district, accessible almost throughout the year.

Moreover Leh has been connected with Manali in Himachal Pradesh. This road which runs over high passes and through grand rugged scenery affords an opportunity to the adventurous motorist for leaving the beautiful Kashmir valley by a different route, running over 11,000 ft. Zoji La, and 14,000 ft. Fote La to Leh and from there over 18,000 ft. Khardong pass into the charming Nubra valley and from there back to the plains via Manali.

Leh, the capital of the Province is a small picturesque town almost in the middle of a small valley, with a population of 7,900. It is approached by a double line of 'manis' (stone structures, believed to provide shelter for the spirits of the departed). The old palace stands on the hill-side. Before Independence, streets were disposed

without any order and formed a most intricate labyrinth, and houses were built contiguously and ran into one another so strangely that, from without, it was difficult to determine the extent of each mansion. They varied from one to three storeys in height. They were usually provided with light wooden balconies. The roofs were flat. The rooms had no chimneys for the offensive and suffocating smoke to go out. But since Independence the people are more prosperous, and so modern type of buildings are going up and with the new layout of the streets, Leh looks quite different from what it once was.

Places of interest. The old Palace: It is built, tier over tier on the hill side, dominating the town, just below it. It was built by Sengge Namgyal. It commands a fine view of the whole valley, and the Spitok monastery built on a hill at its southern extremity, 5 km away. The monastery was built 550 years ago by Gyalpo Bumlde. It is the seat of the head Lama.

Then there is the Shankar Gonpa in which there is the great idol of Lord Maitreya. There is a 'Chorten "on yellow crag, a mile above Leh where there are some supposed graves of ancient Dards.

There is the longest 'Mani' wall at Tewar gorge 850 paces long. 13 km in the west there is another monastery. It stands on a hill, as most of the monasteries are built on hill tops. But, the most important monastery is that of Hemis, 35 km from Leh. It is one of the oldest. Every year thousands of Buddhists from all over Ladakh go there on the occasion of Hemis Festival. Miracle plays are enacted there towards the end of June.

Longer treks from Leh: The most beautiful valley in the province of Ladakh is the Nubra valley. It has a softer climate and is famous for its sweet and delicious apricot orchards. It is an open valley from three to five

km wide, and bounded on the east and north by gigantic snow peaks. Supplies are abundant here. It is a good sporting ground for ibex shooting as well as gurhel. At Panamik there is a hot spring which has a temperature of 170° F. at source and in baths 150° F. It can also be reached by a direct route from Leh via Diger or Khardong passes. Diger route is usually passable in all seasons and has less snow than the Khardong route.

Leh to Sabu: 24 km. Height 15,000 fit.

Sabu to Diger:—34 km, steep Zigzag ascent 2000 ft. Snow on both sides of Diger La. Easy descent to the village of Diger height 15,000 ft.

Diger to Kalsar: 40 km. Long descent to Shyok. Follow down left bank join Khardong route.

Khardong Route

Leh to Sambog: 18 km. bridle road, steady ascent to 15000 ft.

Sambog to Khardong: 16 km, steep ascent. 1½ hrs. (partly over snow 'till August' to pass 17,000 ft. steep descent, sometimes dangerous on account of avlanches to 15,000 ft. Then gradually down the rocky slope, through grassy valley to village. Camp near Sarai in a cluster of willows.

Khardong to Khalsar: 15 km. Steep down narrow gorge to Shyok 25,000 ft. in 8 km. Then along left bank 6 km to Khalsar village.

Khalsar to Tagur: 23 km along Shyok. At km five cross over bridge to the right bank. Then up Nubra valley, sandy maidan with thorny bushes. Then through extensive cultivation to Ran Kralzung and Sumiur villages. Tagur is the chief village. Visit Santaling Gonpa—an interesting monastery of yellow Lamas.

Tagur to Panamik: 19 km. Cross sandy stony maidan.

J&K State on road to Progress

Jammu and Kashmir as a constituent State of the Indian Union has registered phenomenal progress in various fields of socio-economic endeavours.

Some concrete achievement in the sphere of nation building activity :—

1. Expenditure on educational development has increased from 33.68 lakhs in 1947-48 to 1124.04 lakhs in 1972-73.
2. Food production has increased from 9.20 lakh tonnes in 1968-69 to 10.50 lakh tonnes in 1972-73.
3. The number of colleges rose from 4 in 1947-48 to 22 in 1972-73.
4. Per capita expenditure on medical facilities has increased from 47 paise in 1947-48 to Rs. 14.29 in 1972-73.
5. Life expectancy rose from 32 years in 1947-48 to 50 years in 1972-73.
6. Road length increased to 1615 miles in 1956 to 3690 miles in 1972-73.
7. Power generation increased from 4.000 KWS. in 1947-48 to 71.02 MWS in 1972-73.
8. Revenue receipts of the State increased from Rs. 2.74 crores in 1947-48 to Rs. 102.21 crores in 1972-73.

An additional area of 6,500 acres of land is expected to be brought under fruit cultivation, which includes 1,000 acres under walnut production.

Some couple of villages and straggling cultivation. Ford some swift sidestreams, Panamik is a pleasant place with a fine view. Hot spring (see p. 124)

Panamik to Camp Umiung: 23 km. Through cultivation for some miles. Then stony and sandy plain, 14 km to cross. Cross Tillam Buti river; up a well graded zigzag over the cliff at the entrance of the Nullah. Then descend to the river at Unlung. Camp here. Construction of the motorable road has made this journey unnecessary, unless undertaken for adventure.

Zanskar

Drew who visited Zanskar writes: "The wild glacial region of Zanskar lies to the south-west of Ladakh. The only inhabited places of this district are generally narrow ravines of Zanskar river. The population is very small .

"The climate is very rigorous, more snow falls and fierce winds blow than in Central Ladakh. Trees are very scanty even in the villages. Crops ripe with dfficulty. Communication with the outer world is almost cut off during most of the year. It is connected with Leh by a very difficult and circuitous route. Most of the passes to Lahoul, Padar or Suru are rough and laborious. The Shingkin pass to Lahoul is not very difficult and from July to October is crossed by laden ponies.

The pass connecting Suru is the easiest. From Kashmir to Suru (see p. 90). A net work of roads is being laid out now connecting it with Kargil and Suru.

Pangong Lakes

The lakes are of the same type as many other salt lakes of Central Asia. The whole chain of these lakes is still over 144 km long and three to six km broad. The colour of the water is exquisite saphire blue, with which the

orange and carmine tints of the sunset light on the mountains form wonderous combination of rare beauty.

Premission to visit this Plateau has to be obtained from the concerned authorities as part of it is too close to the territory occupied by the Chinese aggressor.

●

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